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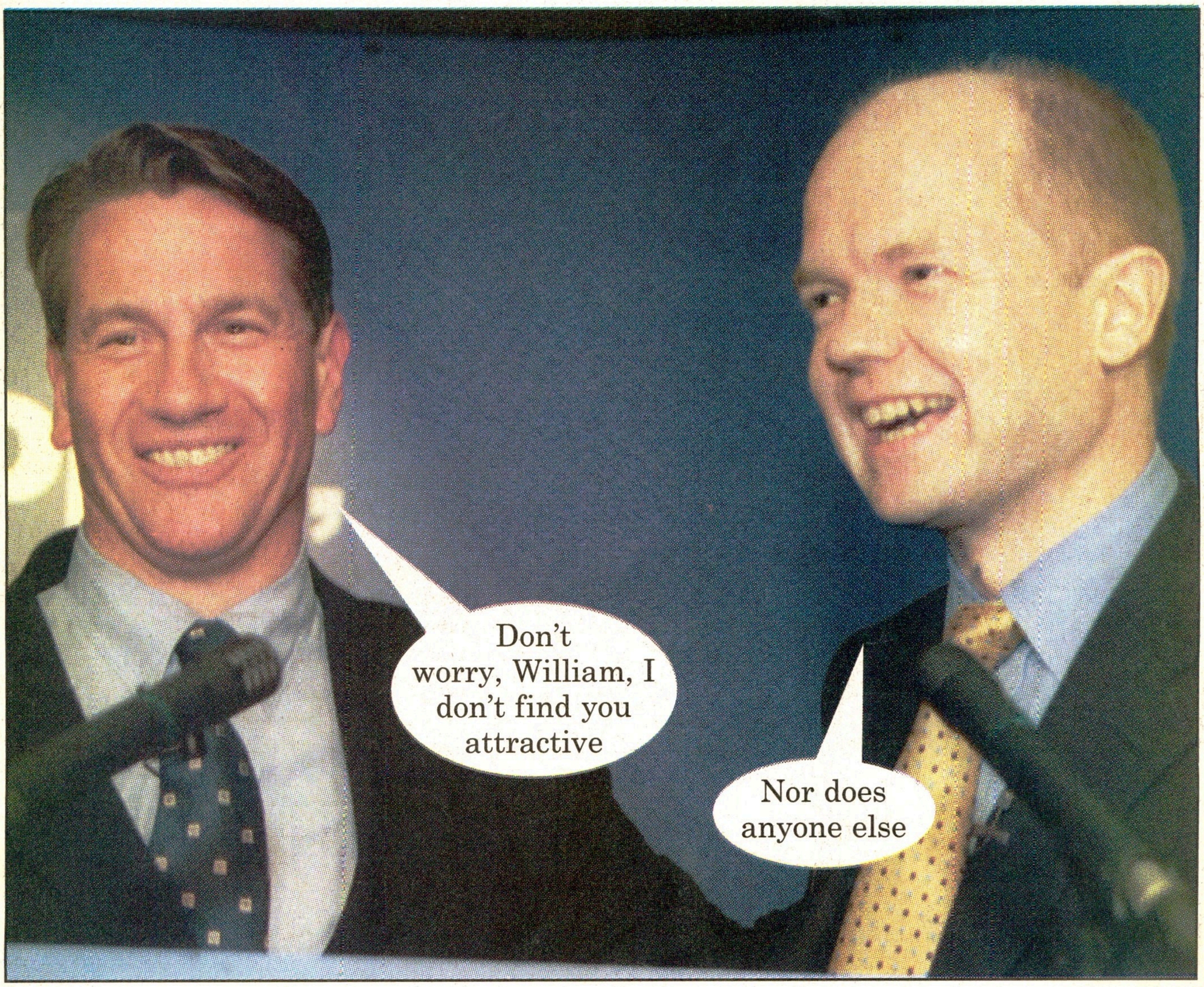

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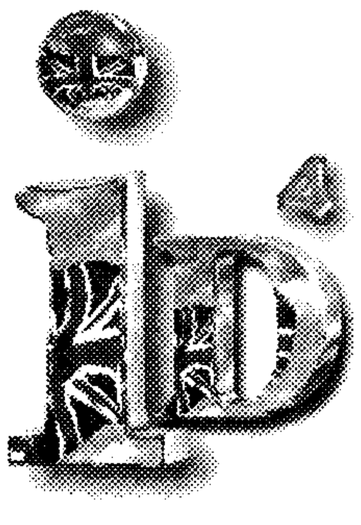

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How I Improved My Memory In One Evening

The Amazing Experience of Robert Heap

"Of *course* I place you! You're Bob Jones of Birmingham."

"If I remember correctly — and I *do* remember correctly — John Bagshaw, the supermarket man, introduced me to you at the dinner of the Bowls Club three years ago in October. I haven't laid eyes on you since. How is the motor business? How did the merger work out?"

The assurance of this speaker — in the crowded corridor of the Hotel Piccadilly compelled me to look at him, though it is not my habit to 'eavesdrop' even in a hotel reception.

"He is Dr. Bruno Furst, the most famous memory expert in the world," said my friend Bob Clark, answering my question before I could get it out. "He will show you a lot more wonderful things than that, before the evening is over."

And he did.

As we went into the banquet room the toast-master was introducing a long line of guests to Dr. Furst. I got in line, and when it came my turn, Dr. Furst asked, "What are your initials Mr. Heap, your occupation and telephone number?" Why he asked this, I learned later, when he picked out from the crowd the sixty men he had met two hours before and called each by name without a mistake. What's more, he named each man's occupation and telephone number.

I won't tell you all the other amazing things this man did except to tell how he called back, without a minute's hesitation, long lists of numbers, playing cards, prices, newspaper articles and anything else the guests gave him in rapid order.

* * *

When I met Dr. Furst he rather bowled me over by saying:

"There is nothing miraculous about my remembering anything I want to remember, whether it be names, faces, figures, facts, or something I have read.

"*You can do this as easily as I do.* Anyone with an average mind can learn quickly to do exactly the same things.

"My own memory," continued Bruno Furst, "was originally very faulty. On meeting a man I would forget his name in thirty seconds, while now there are probably over ten thousand men and women in the world, many of whom I have met only once, whose names I can recall instantly on meeting them."

"That is alright for you, Dr. Furst," I interrupted, "you have given years to it. But how about me?"

"Mr. Heap", he replied, "I can teach you the secret of a good memory in one evening. This is not a guess, because I have done it with thousands of pupils. In the first of twelve simple lessons which I have prepared for home study, I show you the basic principle of my whole system, and you will find it just like playing a fascinating game. I will prove it to you."

He didn't have to. His Course did; I got it the next day from his publishers.

When I tackled the first lesson, I suppose I was the most surprised man in the entire country to find I had learned — in about one hour — how to remember a list of one hundred words so that I could call them off forward and back without a single mistake.

That lesson *stuck*. So did the other eleven. Indeed, I was so impressed I introduced Dr. Furst's Course to this country.

Read this letter from Mr. J. W. Sullivan of London SW2:

"I feel I must drop you a line and let you know how pleased I am with your course.

"I used to be laughed at in the office here about my poor memory and I must admit with a lot of truth.

"Since I started your course my memory has improved out of all recognition.

"What is more the course is interesting and not tedious."

Mr. Sullivan didn't exaggerate.

Dr Bruno Furst's Course is fantastic! I can rely on my memory now. I can recall the name of anyone I have met before — and I keep getting better. I can remember any figures I wish. Telephone numbers come to mind instantly. What's more my concentration has improved.

The old fear of forgetting has vanished. I used to be 'scared stiff' of speaking — because I wasn't *sure*. I couldn't remember what I wanted to say.

Now I am sure of myself, confident, and relaxed when I get on my feet at the club, at a dinner, in a business meeting, or in any social gathering.

The most enjoyable part of it all is that I am now a good conversationalist — and I used to be as quiet as a lamb when I got into a crowd of people.

Now I can call up like a flash of lightning almost any fact I want. I used to think a 'hair trigger' memory belonged to the prodigy and genius. Now I see that every one of us has that kind of memory if we know how to make it work.

It's a wonderful thing, after groping around in the dark for so many years, to be able to switch on your mind and see instantly everything you want to remember.

What's more, I have become more popular and influential.

This Dr. Furst Course will do wonders in your work.

Since we took it up you never hear anyone in our office say "I think" or "It was about so much" or "I forgot" or "I can't remember" or "I must look up his name." Now they are right there with the answer like a shot.

Here is a letter from Mr. W. J. Heaney, a well-known journalist in Ireland:

"Thank you for the Memory and Concentration Course . . . I would like you to know that I have been captivated by it and now regret that I had not the good fortune to come upon it years ago.

"I am a journalist with both a multiplicity of interests and a voracious hunger for learning. This I tell you so that you will understand my need of a reliable memory and also the priceless value of the course to me.

"Dr. Furst I have come to regard as a multiple genius, and in 'You Can Remember!', I am astonished to find so much value for so small a fee."

My advice to you is don't wait another minute. Full details of Dr. Furst's amazing Course are available free on request. You will be astounded to learn what a wonderful memory you have got. Your dividends in both business and social advancement will be enormous.

ROBERT HEAP

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Full details of Dr. Furst's easy-to-follow method for developing a powerful memory are contained in a free booklet entitled "Adventures in Memory". To obtain your copy, and further proof that Dr. Furst's system really works, just telephone 0800 298 7070 free or post the coupon below (you don't even need to stamp your envelope). Or simply send your name and address to: Memory & Concentration Studies, (Dept. PYM19T), FREEPOST 246, London WC1A 1BR.

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Gnome

AFTER a great deal of heart-searching, the Gnome on Sunday has decided *not* to pay £500,000 to Major James Hewitt for serialising his sensitive memoir *The Di Who Shagged Me.*

We decided that our paramount concern was to avoid causing undue distress to the Royal Princes and the other members of the Royal Family.

We were not moved in any way by criticism of our behaviour by other newspapers, nor were we in the slightest bit interested in saving a huge sum of money after getting a load of free publicity.

Only the highest considerations of national interest were in my mind when I personally intervened to stop the serialisation. I insisted instead that the Gnome on Sunday run a more suitable twelve-page feature entitled "Why No One Should Ever Know The Following Twenty Saucy Sex Secrets Of Princess Di And Her Love Rat Hewitt".

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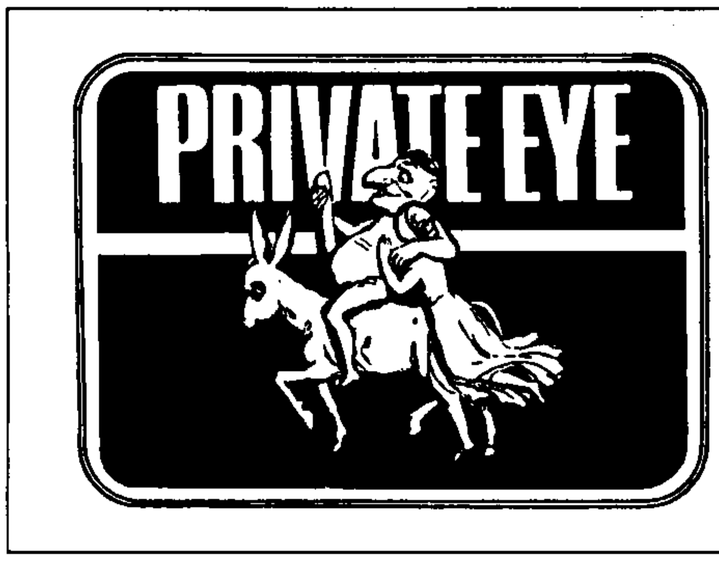


COLOUR SECTION

THE MEN WHO CAME TO DINNER

LORD NEILL's insistence, to "new" Labour's dismay, that sponsorship and donations are the same when it comes to political parties, has resulted in the creation of a new category in Millbank accounts: that of "Tickets for Dinner".

Donors and diners alike are now obliged to have their names revealed to the public if they pay more than £5,000 for the privilege of tucking in with Tony. In the recent past there have been some very interesting names on the *placements*.

On the "Nice Work If You Can Get it" table with guest of honour Lord "two million" Sainsbury have been Arts Council chairman Gerry Robinson, Better Regulation "task force" chairman Lord Haskins and "New Deal" contractor in the City of London and Hackney, Alec Reed.

And who's that tucking in to the *foie gras* over there? Why it's the board of British Aerospace! Probably best not to talk to them about East Timor – certainly not since the last-minute government PR move of cancelling the order for Hawk aircraft means Tony now owes *them* an awful lot of compensation.

Mind you, other countries can be just as sensitive. Which may explain why GKN Westland, Matra Bae, Raytheon and Lockheed didn't attend in person but sent along their lobbying firms GJW and GPC, both of whom are listed as "Tickets for Dinners" supporters. They no doubt talked shop with Citygate Westminster, Grandfield Public Affairs and Lawson Lucas Mendelsohn, though they should be careful not to give away the identities of the clients they have bought their dinner tickets in order to represent.

Meanwhile, sharing a pie and chips in the corner with John Prescott is Railtrack! And isn't that utilities giant Enron deep in discussion with Baroness Jay's old employers Scottish Power? And there's American postal giant UPS studying the menu, no doubt hoping for a slice of the Royal Mail when it is privatised.

It's nice to see that after all that pre-election talk about raised values and open government, Tony's got his appetite back.

IN the furore surrounding the disclosure that science minister Lord Sainsbury had given £2m to Labour and a further £1m to himself in the form of grants to the Sainsbury laboratory, a less well-known name on the list of party donors has gone unnoticed.

Listed as having given more than £5,000 is Dr Chris Evans – not the ginger-haired TV presenter but the chairman of Merlin Ventures, dubbed the "Biotech King" for his massive investment in biotechnology companies.

Tony Blair gave Lord Sainsbury the job of science minister with special responsibility for the biotechnology industry, and Sainsbury in turn gave Evans a job. In April this year he announced the appointment of a research team to look into how the potential of areas with a high cluster of GM firms (biotechnology clusters) could be developed. Evans was appointed as the only non-academic member of the team – even though his occupation is investing in precisely the firms he was supposed to be impartially investigating.

Two months before the research team reported back to the minister, Evans announced that he would be working with Arthur Andersen to raise a new fund of £100m which would be invested in biotechnology firms – elsewhere in Europe.

SO THE Jakarta generals will not be making the trip to Chertsey this week for the annual "Buy British" arms bazaar. Not because they are not welcome but because they are rather too busy with events at home.

In fact their absence doesn't really matter: Britain's ministry of defence already offers the Indonesians a superb home shopping service via the defence export services organisation (DESO) which runs an office in the centre of Jakarta.

Its function is to promote and facilitate weapons sales to the ruling regime – or as the DESO itself termed it in a leaked memo issued a year after the implementation of Labour's "ethical" foreign policy, "to enable the UK to win major future orders" – raising the worth of the arms trade to Indonesia tenfold to £3bn by 2007. Methods proposed include "effective ministerial visits to the region, increased military contacts at all levels, and innovative financial solutions". This will be achieved with the help of a budget for the three-man office of £80m in the current financial year.

IN a tremendous full-page exclusive, the *Mail on Sunday* revealed last weekend that GMB union leader John "the Walrus" Edmonds had been branded a bully by a former secretary, Elaine Wright, who is taking her ex-boss to an industrial tribunal.

This will come as no surprise to readers of the *Eye*, where Mrs Wright's story was first reported three months ago. Nor will it surprise GMB members, who have grown accustomed to their union's rather uncomradely management style.

Earlier this year the GMB was forced to pay five-figure compensation to another former employee, Warren Glover, who had been sacked after complaining about "cover-ups" at the union's Wimbledon HQ. Until his dismissal, Glover was employed as the in-house expert on, er, workplace bullying.

Two years ago, Edmonds had the distinction of being the first person reported to the TUC's Bad Bullying Boss hotline, set up to "name and shame" dictatorial employers. The caller, who was too frightened to give her name to the confidential hotline because she feared another of his legendary "rages", accused the Walrus of bulldozing through "flexible working practices" and rejecting all staff suggestions. He had also refused staff permission to hold a union meeting on GMB premises, and then sent his personnel officer to eavesdrop when they adjourned to an alleyway nearby.

Needless to say, the TUC decided it would be too embarrassing to "name and shame" this particular Bad Bullying Boss – not least because the allegations were all true.

- ***Treachery among hacks: how spy stories work 6***
- ***Privacy on parade: royal humbug special 7***
- ***Bright-on comrades: TUC at the seaside 8***
- ***Ulster: Still committed to The Committee ... 11***
- ***Saltwooding it away: Slicker on Alan Clark, share-dealer 28***

"Hmm... You have an infection, so I'll prescribe you a course of animal feed..."

Street of Shame

THE tale of Agent Hola is a saga of betrayal, subterfuge and skulduggery – not least on the part of the *Times* hacks who "revealed" the story.

"The revelations in the *Times* on Saturday... dominated news bulletins around the world," the paper boasted this week. "She [Melita Norwood] was unmasked by Christopher Andrew, the Cambridge professor whose book *The Mitrokhin Archive: The KGB and the West* is being serialised in *The Times* this week."

Er, up to a point. Andrew is in fact the co-author of the book with the KGB defector Vasili Mitrokhin. Since Mitrokhin knew little of British publishing (at one stage he proposed that the book should have an initial print-run of seven million copies), he was happy to defer to Andrew's judgement in choosing and editing the most sensational material from the 60 volumes of documents he smuggled to the west. Meanwhile, Mitrokhin was also cooperating with former *Observer* hack David Rose on a BBC series, *The Spying Game*, which was due to start this Sunday shortly after the *Times* began serialising the book.

In mid-August, however, the book's publisher Penguin hit a slight problem. Its legal advisers, Peter Carter-Fuck and Partners, belatedly noticed that there was no proof that Melita Norwood was a KGB agent. Christopher Andrew had not managed to track her down or interview her, and if she sued for libel there would be no evidence other than Mitrokhin's uncorroborated documents. Alas, Andrew did not know where she was.

David Rose did, however. And so a deal was done with Carter-Fuck, Christopher Andrew, Brian MacArthur of the *Times* and Stuart Proffitt of Penguin. Rose would doorstep the old lady and get her to confirm the story. The *Times* could then go ahead with its serialisation, plus Rose's interview, and in return it would print handsome plugs for the BBC programme. As part of the deal, the *Times* promised not to attempt an interview with Mrs Norwood.

Rose and his producer set off for Bexleyheath, secretly wired for sound. Agent Hola confessed all. Her comments were transmitted live to a nearby recording van, in which sat *Times* hack Andrew Pierce.

If the BBC team hadn't located her, Penguin would probably have been obliged to pulp the book and the *Times* would have lost its scoop. Was the Thunderer duly grateful? Not in the least. Last Friday, blithely ignoring its promise, the paper secretly despatched Pierce to Bexleyheath to interview her himself for the next day's huge front-page splash. But many of the quotes used in the story actually came from the BBC's interview, something the *Times* neglected to mention. And when the serialisation proper began this week, there was no sign of the promised plugs for the BBC programme-makers who had done all the research and stood the story up.

Having royally ripped off its BBC colleagues, the *Times* is now treating Mrs Norwood as its exclusive property. When a reporter from BBC News rang the house on Sunday, the phone was answered by a man describing himself as "a relative", who declined to let her come to the phone. Who was this protective kinsman? Step forward... Andrew Pierce.

THE sight of Greg Martin waltzing across the editorial floor of the *Mail on Sunday* last Wednesday morning stunned even the most hardened cynical hacks.

For the *Mail on Sunday* had led the charge in exposing Martin as a loathsome love rat and general all-round scumbag which resulted in Tara Palmer-Tomkinson having to dump him. Just three days earlier the paper had published a sympathetic double-page interview with talentless Tara in which she whinged about the son of the former Beatles producer, Sir George Martin.

No doubt we can expect a heart-rending sob story from Martin in which he claims that women don't understand him. Perhaps this is what the *Mail on Sunday* view as balanced journalism.

JUST FANCY THAT!

"The Cold War may be over but our fascination with the undercover war between East and West lives on. Espionage and its associated skulduggeries have always commanded intense interest..."
— *Daily Mail*, 13 September, page 11

"Now the old Soviet Union is gone, we've lost our fascination with spies."
— *Daily Mail*, 13 September, page 13

AS THE silly season draws to a close, families across Britain are coming to terms with the tragic deaths of their loved ones while on holiday in Spain.

Falling off buildings, car crashes and drowning have accounted for the lives of more than two dozen British holidaymakers on the Costas this year. And this summer, once again, the pain of bereavement has been exacerbated by having the press doorstepping relatives, demanding interviews and the photo on the mantelpiece before news of the death has even been officially announced.

Most of the stories come from two stringers, Tim Brown of the *Telegraph* and William Bond of the *Mail*, who jointly run an agency in Madrid and will file copy to even the trashiest of papers if there's a fiver in it. Since time immemorial this gruesome pair have employed one Bridget Nunez as their secretary and accounts clerk. It is doubtless entirely coincidental, however, that la Nunez also works as the secretary to the British embassy press office in Madrid.

THE *Grauniad* is justly proud of its new annual prize, the First Book Award. Here at last is a prize that supports emerging talent, rather than lining the pockets of the already rich and famous.

But at least one "first book" is conspicuous by its absence from the shortlist: James Hall's *The World as Sculpture: The Changing Status of Sculpture From the Renaissance to the Present Day* (Chatto). An odd omission, since this ambitious tome has been garlanded with rave reviews. "*The World as Sculpture* deserves to win a bucketful of prizes," John McEwen wrote in *Literary Review*. "Just occasionally," Richard Gott commented in the *Indie*, "a book comes along that is so intelligent and so illuminating that one wants to cry out Hallelujah! This is one of them. "This book tells its absorbing tale with humour and panache," David Ekserdjian agreed in the *FT*. "Hall is astonishingly sure-footed..."

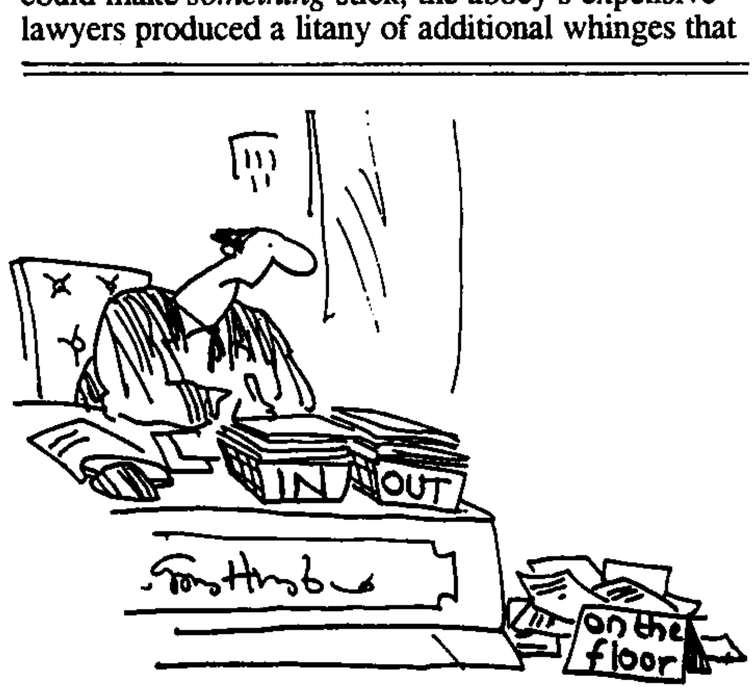
Hall is also, however, a former art critic of the *Guardian*. As soon as Alan Rusbridger became editor in 1995 he appointed Claire Armitstead as arts editor, and Hall was one of the first casualties of her new regime.

And who is the *Guardian*'s current literary editor, in charge of the First Book Award? Step forward, er, Claire Armitstead.

WESTMINSTER Abbey's coffers have once again been depleted by the prickly dean Wesley Carr.

Convinced there is a conspiracy by the press to portray him as devious and mean-spirited, the saintly Carr spent thousands of pounds protesting to the press complaints commission (PCC) about his treatment in the *Sunday Times*.

The dean's principal beef concerned its report of the abbey's £10,000 bill to the family of poet laureate Ted Hughes for his memorial service. Lest that particular complaint fail, and in the hope that they could make *something* stick, the abbey's expensive lawyers produced a litany of additional whinges that



"And when you started licking your bum I could've died"

the *ST*, and in particular religious affairs correspondent Christopher Morgan, were being horrid about them.

In late August the PCC threw out the entire complaint.

IN a recent *Times* article, the great William Rees-Mogg set out to prove that even respectable West Country folk had succumbed to the contagion of liberal degeneracy.

In Somerset, he claimed, it was now easier to buy drugs than a copy of the *Spectator*: not long ago a "block" of cannabis and some "used fivers" had been found in a telephone box at Hinton Blewett. The implication was that the village green was now a hotbed of drug-dealing.

Had the revered scribe made inquiries in the village pub, the Ring O'Bells, he would have learned that the cannabis – not a block, just enough for a joint or two – was in fact left behind by a chap from Oldham, not a Somerset liberal. The man had sensibly phoned for a taxi after overdosing, not on heroin or cannabis but real ale, and left his wallet, £40 and his cannabis behind.

Mogg was certainly well placed for some on-the-spot research. Though he neglected to mention it in his article, at the time of the cannabis discovery he was a resident of Hinton Blewett, and the telephone box in question was just outside his front door!

HUMBUG AWARDS

WHEN the *Mail on Sunday*'s serialisation deal with Princess Diana's former lover James Hewitt collapsed, it allowed the newspapers that had condemned it to claim a victory of sorts. But who were these self-righteous champions of privacy?

● The *Sun*, which claimed to have "led the way" in damning the deal with "the most hated man in Britain"; a "Judas" who is "abused in the street, shunned by old friends, and with no job to speak of" after trying to "cash in".

FACT: *Sun* editor David Yelland was abused, shunned and left with no job to speak of only three months earlier when he agreed to pay Kara Noble £100,000 for a private snapshot of Sophie Rhys-Jones's bosoms. And who can forget the *Sun*'s earlier 20 raunchy pictures of "Diana" "frolicking" in her "sports bra and lycra work-out shorts" with none other than "James Hewitt" — pictures that were found to have been faked?

● The *Mirror,* which also claimed to lead the assault on the *MoS* and "the ultimate betrayal not just of Diana but of her two sons who are of an age when it's almost impossible to shield them from Hewitt's tawdry tales".

FACT: A handy account of seven of the more tawdry tales appeared in full in the *Mirror* a week later. And who was the focus of unusual legal attention from the palace in January when he published "private letters" from an unnamed royal source that referred to the relationship between Charles and Diana? Why Piers Moron, editor-in-humbug of the *Mirror*!

PRIVATE I-I-I

BY popular demand the *Eye*'s award to the Street of Shame's most self-obsessed columnists returns. £10 paid for entries.

This week's nominee: **Danny Baker** in the *Times* who notched up 31 "I"s in one article – an I-rating of 1.7 per column inch.

Nominated by Jon Alexi Bodhra

HACKWATCH

Guardian Style

THE *Guardian* never dodges the big questions. "Has Gwyneth Paltrow blown it by being too smug this year? Has Catherine-Zeta Jones blown it by hooking up with Michael Douglas?... What do you value in a [TV] presenter? Nice shirts? Good teeth? Big tits?... What has been your must-have item this season? Stella McCartney's Chloe Aviators?... How hard can it be to look fantastic all the time?"

But there is another question that editor Alan Rusbridger must occasionally ask himself as he woos the yoof audience. Is he trying to produce an intelligent newspaper for grown-ups, or a vacuous comic for airheads who find *Tatler* too intellectually taxing? A glance at his lavish new Style section may provide the answer...

23 July: Today's *Grauniad* carries a serious feature by Joanna Blythman about school dinners. Children's health is endangered, she warns, by the fact that school meals consist almost exclusively of chips, pizzas, hot dogs and burgers. Turn the page to the Style section and you have the perfect antidote to such old-fashioned *Guardian* earnestness — a list of the best-selling pizzas at Pizza Express in Kingston, Surrey (hot or what?), followed by an angry rant against "fruit fascists" who eat healthy lunches rather than "perfectly normal" fare such as "a packet of crisps and a Wispa Mint".

30 July: The Style section identifies "the one indispensable object" every girl should have: a white shirt. "There's something about a plain white top's crispness and simplicity that never fails to suit... the shops are full of variations on the plain white top." On the very next page, however, we learn that "red will be the big colour this autumn. Look to the fashion glossies and all the models are wearing it". By way of compromise, yet another article identifies the latest must-have item as a pair of Paul Smith beaded slippers — in, er, pink.

6 August: Rather belatedly the Style section discovers the existence of Oxfam chic. "The taboo that used to be associated with second-hand clothes shops has disappeared," advises fashion merchant John Morris. But be warned: it's "a definite no-no" to have lots of second-hand gear. "If you're all retro, you look like you're trying too hard." Or, worse still, that you don't have much money — a most unstylish solecism.

13 August: "What's slimline, sexy, plastic, fits nicely in your baguette bag and is *the* must-have for erogenous zones this season?" The new perfume Gucci Rush, of course: "It's bright, minimal, mysterious and very, very red, as all the best things are this autumn," Molly Gunn reveals. Meanwhile, the other must-have item is a tin of Altoids peppermints (which are very, very white, as all the best things also are this autumn). But Gunn isn't sure if Altoids will catch on. "The acid test will surely come during next month's shows; will they replace the Polo as the fashionistas' carefully rationed calorie intake of choice? We'll have to see." Can't wait.

20 August: According to resident trend-seeker Jess Cartner-Morley, champagne has been regarded as pretty unstylish if not downright naff in recent years. "But slowly, surely and in time for the millennium, bubbly is making a comeback." The first sign was when "quarter-bottles of Moet with straws started appearing at fashion-set parties: undeniably cute". Now comes the confirmation: modish upmarket drinking establishments will soon be stocking the new baby bottles of Pop champagne by Pommery — "with special smaller bubbles to make it easier to drink through a straw".

27 August: Exclusive! "We deconstruct Tara's post-engagement outfit." No fewer than two pages are filled with Jess Cartner-Morley's analysis of the clothes La Palmer-Tomkinson wore on the morning after splitting with her fiance: the Miu-Miu lookalike mules ("the all-important heel gives those legs extra length just when Tara needs to look taller"); the trousers ("feather-trimmed, Navajo-beaded jeans have been this year's must-have item. If you've got a pair, it was £1,900 well spent"); the floppy sun-hat ("could be explained as part of the folk look"). Even her sunglasses come under intense scrutiny. "Tara has been snapped recently sporting this summer's most wanted style of shades: classic aviator glasses, as seen with a diamante heart at Chloe. But these sunglasses are a classic, slightly 50s shape." Why is she wearing them? "Maybe she's been crying. Maybe she hasn't.

It's none of our business, really."

3 September: Alarming news: Jess Cartner-Morley reveals that "extremely credible people" have lately been spending less time clubbing. "It's become quite acceptable to lounge away your Saturday nights in bars, parties or private drinking clubs," she laments, "without ever setting foot on a dancefloor. Some even stayed at home, cracked open the Cava and called it domestic hedonism." Luckily, all that may change with the opening of two hot new London club venues, Home in Leicester Square and Fabric ("the name is distinctly East London") in Clerkenwell. But not everyone is convinced. "They're going for that thirtysomething Spirito de Punto naff cocaine lifestyle," club columnist Jacques Perretti grumbles. "It's all about the peripheral stuff older people love: smart bar stools and clean toilets you can snort your drugs off. That's not the point of going out at all."

10 September: Al Deakin of Seniotic Solutions offers a "deconstruction" of Marks & Spencer's beef wellington, which is packaged in a black box with gold lettering. "Gold and black are colours which suggest quality in Western culture," Al observes. "Specifically the combination is associated with imperialism and seriousness." M&S customers are thus given "the opportunity to buy into traditional class stratifications". (An alternative possibility – that they might simply want a beef wellington – is apparently too far-fetched to deserve a mention.) In an accompanying article, style guru Richard Benson notes that the "colour-psychology" of black appeals to "the growing millennial middle class", whatever that may be. It is "one of the biggest marketing stories of the late 90s", he reckons. "Black, you might say, is the new platinum".

Or, then again, you might not. Whatever happened to red?

Household Appliances

COOKER, Baby boiling, 2 plates, grill and oven; £20

Edinburgh Evening News

LUVVIES

"She selects films with spiritual journeys. That is the journey of an actor. She symbolizes the quest not for money but for discovering who we all are together."

HARVEY KEITEL (on Kate Winslet)
Observer

"I'd had enough of EastEnders – I felt I'd been taking in toxins for a long while and now I was breathing it all out."

MARTINE McCUTCHEON
Observer

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

PRISON NEWS

TWO years ago an enterprising inmate at Spring Hill Prison, Buckinghamshire, noticed that not all his fellow cons were always ecstatic about the prospect of spending a day out of nick with the wife and kids.

Residents of open prisons are entitled to two days outside per month, usually at weekends and subject to good behaviour, on condition they are collected and returned by a named individual at set times.

Shortly before he was discharged this inmate, a Nigerian fraudster who now goes under the name of Ode Tekunde, arranged with a fellow con to drive down the following weekend with a nubile young woman, sign him out and drive them somewhere undisturbed so that, er, nature could take its course. A small charge of £200 was necessary to cover expenses and encourage discretion, but the arrangement was so successful that word spread and a small but regular clientele was established.

A bevy of better-class girls (taking days off from their regular work in London massage parlours) found themselves regularly visiting prisons accompanied by a growing string of drivers (all former cons).

The transfer of inmates between prisons led business to expand to take in a number of other prisons in the south. Erring husbands tell their wives they only get one day out a month, leaving the other free for more pleasurable pursuits than tramping round the exercise yard. The business, run by Tekunde from his flat in Ilford, Essex, now charges up to £300 a time and serves an average of 50 men per month in seven prisons, bringing in at least £200,000.

Tekunde now has competition, however. An interloper is seeking to corner the market at Ford prison, where a deal with a brothel in nearby Brighton has reduced charges to West Sussex cons to a bargain £175 for regular clients paying cash.

Inmates wanting to arrange business deals or maintain liaisons with their mistresses have also found the service useful for providing the means of being signed-out and chauffeured to nearby hotels by friendly, unquestioning drivers. And as the hard-pressed prison service makes no real checks on the person signing a prisoner out, other than spot checks on names and addresses with the electoral roll, business looks set to continue expanding.

SUPERMODELS

KERBER

HARD AT WORK WITH THE FASHION EDITORS
IT'S NO LONGER ABOUT 'TRENDS'. IT'S ABOUT PEOPLE HAVING THE FREEDOM AND CONFIDENCE TO EXPERIMENT WITH THEIR OWN TASTES.
THAT'S RIGHT. IT'S ABOUT THE PUBLIC MAKING THEIR OWN CHOICES..... BEING INDIVIDUAL!
YEH I LIKE IT— "BEING INDIVIDUAL" IS THE NEW "FOLLOWING A TREND."
BRILLIANT— LET'S RUN IT FOR A COUPLE OF MONTHS.
...JUST MAKE IT AN AUTUMN '99 THING!

THE brothers and sisters attending the TUC's annual seaside conference in Brighton do not agree with each other about a great deal.

They are at loggerheads over Europe and daggers drawn over "sweetheart deals" signed by the electricians and engineers union, AEEU, with employers. But on one thing they do agree: "new" Labour's U-turn on post office privatisation must be resisted at all costs.

Once upon a time, but not so very long ago, Labour spearheaded a national campaign to "Save our Post Office". Shadow ministers were despatched from Cornwall to Caithness with the message that the post office would only be safe in Labour's hands. Leading the charge were two doughty campaigners: Tony Blair and Robin Cook, who launched their anti-privatisation drive from billboard hoardings outside Conservative central office in Smith Square.

The post office unions meanwhile spent a fortune with Sir Tim Bell's then PR outfit, Lowe Bell, to lobby Tory backwoodsmen to drop the plans. So successful was the campaign that Michael Heseltine shelved his privatisation project. Yet within 18 months of its landslide victory, "new" Labour was busy "thinking the unthinkable" and its own pre-election promises were shelved. At Brighton this week – and more embarrassingly at Labour's Bournemouth conference next month – the unions are digging in for a fight. And since most Labourites devoted huge energies to delivering all those anti-privatisation messages from Tony and Robin a few years back, there is every chance they will vote in Bournemouth to block the government's plans. Postman Pat is set to take his revenge.

LORD Sainsbury's generosity is legendary. Back in the early 1980s, just as his old chum Sir Ian Wrigglesworth was telling lobby hacks he and his SDP colleagues would break with Labour "at a time which would cause most damage to it", Lord Sainsbury was opening his pockets to Wrigglesworths' and the Gang of Four's venture.

Sainsbury continued to fund the SDP even after three members of the original Gang of Four had won a vote for merger with David Steel's Liberal Democrats. Their dumping of the SDP was largely a result of the deep hatred that "Woy" Jenkins, Bill Rodgers and Shirley Williams reserved for the fourth member of their gang, Dr David Owen.

"Dr Death" was able to depend on Sainsbury's generosity until the SDP, now down to three MPs, finally expired at the end of the 80s. Now with a number of his old cronies from the defunct SDP strategically placed in the Number 10 Policy Unit, Sainsbury is content to be fairy godmother to "new" Labour, while also acting as government minister and being an advocate of GM food. Thus, Sainsbury feels able to demonstrate absolutely no conflict of interest whatsoever.

"NEW" Labour wannabe Ed Owen came unstuck at a recent selection meeting in Wigan, where the death of Roger Stott has forced a by-election.

The high-flying Owen is a senior adviser to Jack Straw at the home office. But when the local comrades came to vote, it rapidly became apparent that their support had not gone to Owen, but to a grey-haired councillor who immediately promised to "stand-up for traditional working class Labour voters", this sending an immediate shiver down Alastair Campbell's spine.

So worried has party HQ become that local Labour parties will plump for the most off-message hoary old Labourites, that selected individuals have been encouraged to telephone Labour MPs of a certain age to inquire if they "are contemplating retiring" in order for some fast footwork to be mounted for a Blair favourite. Even the amiable Bruce Grocott, PPS to the prime minister, was overheard telephoning colleagues recently: "Are you thinking of stepping down...Really?... No, did you say?... Er... thank you very much."

HIGHLANDS and Islands Enterprise (HIE) dished out a £30,000 grant to help publish a history book about the region to mark the new millennium and "make a lasting contribution" to Highland culture.

It paid the money to Edinburgh Mainstream Publishing in 1997 to produce the hardback *Last of the Free* by author James Hunter.

Another local historian, retired teacher Andrew Marshall, has complained that when he approached HIE for a much smaller amount of money to finance his 90-page history of Kinlochbervie he was refused. Marshall was told HIE did not give money to individuals and certainly not for a book.

The exception made in the case of Jim Hunter is surely unconnected to the fact that in 1997 Hunter was chairman of Skye and Localsh Enterprise, part of the HIE network, and is now overall chair of HIE.

NORTHERN Ireland secretary Mo Mowlam chose a typically symbolic site for her address on the future of the Good Friday agreement last week – Ulida Integrated College in Carrickfergus.

Ulida is one of a handful of integrated schools in the province, where Protestant and Catholic children are educated side by side. With its tolerant, positive associations the school made an ideal backdrop for Mowlam's increasingly unconvincing words of hope. But these associations do not apparently make it an ideal project for government funding, having been turned down twice in the last two years.

In December 1997 Tony Blair used a Christmas service at Hazelwood Integrated College for a similar photo-opportunity. Days later his government turned down three proposals for new integrated schools in Northern Ireland.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

THE recent eulogies about Alan Clark and his colourful life bring to mind a comment overheard in the Upper House.

When told of Clark's famous remark about Michael Heseltine having had to buy his own furniture, an elderly member of the House of Lords was heard to say: "Well, that is a bit rich coming from someone whose father had to buy his own castle!"

THE *EYE* pointed out last month that Ulster-born sports minister Kate Hoey's views on Irish affairs have undergone dramatic revision since she entered parliament in 1989. In those days she "yearned for a united Ireland", yet by the dawning of the Blair era she had been reborn as an uncompromising Unionist (*Eye* 982).

A more serious about-turn in Hoey's views has now been exposed by those fine investigative organs, *Up The Arse* and Arseweb, respectively the fanzine and unofficial website of Arsenal FC.

Hoey tells interviewers she is a dedicated Arsenal supporter, yet in October 1994 Arsenal's Gunners magazine had this to say about the MP for Vauxhall: "Kate was born in Northern Ireland and fell in love with football as she stood on her stool cheering George Best from the terraces of Windsor Park. Living in London she had ample opportunity to watch Arsenal, but retained her childhood support for Manchester United."

So many members of the new Labour Islington support Arsenal that Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson had a moan last month about "Arsenal supporters in the government". Surely the lovely Kate cannot have switched allegiance merely for the sake of political correctness?

OFFICERS in Tony Blair's Sedgefield constituency have stumbled on the perfect antidote to declining membership.

It does not involve asking Lord Sainsbury for more money; and it avoids eating humble pie by begging fed-up old lags to rejoin the party. Instead, those deemed sympathetic to "new" Labour are being offered yearly membership cards for the princely sum of 10p.

In addition the new "members" can sign-up their families under a new family membership scheme without having to ask any of them. Thus as every other Labour party in the country is obliged to reveal dismal falling rolls, Tony's constituency can substantially buck the trend and show everyone else just how it can be done!

LORD Sainsbury's decision to give £2m worth of Reward Vouchers to his patron in Downing Street offers Tony Blair the chance to come to the rescue of two seriously injured children.

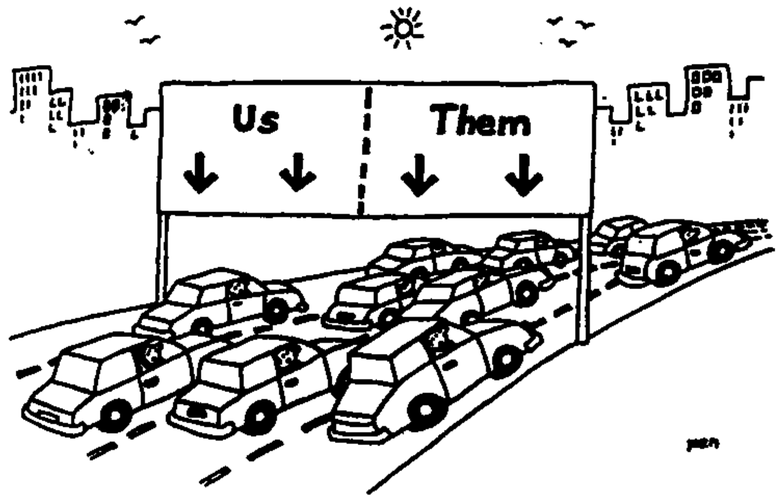
When Blair was forced to reveal the existence of Bernie Ecclestone's secret £1m gift (then to deny it had influenced his U-turn on tobacco sponsorship, then to refuse to admit there was anything wrong with keeping the money, and then to hand back the money anyway), Planet Hollywood's chief executive came to the rescue.

Burger magnate Robert Earl dipped into funds provided by sales of stock options in the now distressed chain, and handed over £1m to replace Ecclestone's donation. This was handy as Labour was heavily overdrawn and would have had to borrow the money had Earl not emerged from a private meeting with Tony Blair "enthused" and ready to sign a personal cheque.

Times have changed, and given the burger firm's financial plight, further donations from Earl are most unlikely. Indeed, Planet Hollywood is now in such a mess it's failed to pay all the bills for those injured in a terrorist attack on one of its restaurants in South Africa.

Nine years old Laura Giddings and her four year old brother Jacob, from Bramshaw in Hampshire, were seriously injured when a bomb expoloded at the Cape Town branch a year ago. At the time the image conscious Planet Hollywood celebrity founders – S. Stallone, B. Willis, A. Schwarzenegger – put out a statement pledging that the restaurant would pick up the medical bills for those who survived the blast.

The Giddings family have so far received nothing, and given that Laura has had one leg amputated and Jacob has sharpnel lodged in his spine, face huge long-term costs. Might not caring "new" Labour and family man Blair want to divert some of the Sainsbury money to this worthy cause rather than wasting it on pointless focus groups?



DEREK WYATT, Labour MP for Sittingbourne and Sheppey, is sharply criticised in a district auditor's report on the £50m debt run up by Haringey council while rebuilding Alexandra Palace.

Objectors alleged that between 1994 and 1996 then Councillor Wyatt, chair of Ally Pally's board of trustees, spent £100,000 preparing a failed bid for millennium funding. Some went on lobbying visits to the Tory conference and trips to "trotting races" in Paris. Only £5,000 was authorised by the board.

District auditor Jim McWhirr concludes that the council's former chief financial officer "should have put in place effective arrangements to ensure that only properly audited expenditure was incurred. I am also critical of former Councillor Wyatt... in this regard". But McWhirr does not say either man should be surcharged. "Negligence and/or lack of judgement fall short of wilful misconduct," he says. Objectors are now trying to persuade Wyatt to repay his share of the money.

Notably absent from criticism is former council leader Toby Harris, now trying to become deputy mayor of London even though the report says he behaved "contrary to law" in instructing Haringey to define the overspend as a debt owed by the palace to the council. The debt is being written off at a cost to local taxpayers of more than £7m a year for the next 10 years.

Another to emerge from McWhirr's report without a stain is the district auditor who allowed the council to pretend it was owed money by the trust every year from 1990 onwards. His name? Jim McWhirr.

"You 'just want to be happy' – what kind of a pie-in-the-sky ambition is that?"

IT LOOKS as though Beattie Media, the PR firm which employs the Scottish secretary's son Kevin Reid, was right to warn first minister Donald Dewar of the potential for a Drapergate-style scandal in Scotland's new parliament (see *Eye* 984).

A member of the board of Enterprise Ayrshire, David Sneller, was forced to stand down at the end of last month by the Nationalist MSP for Central Scotland Alex Neil, partly because of a conflict of interest with his role as public affairs director of lobbyists PS Communications Consultants.

Now the SNP is demanding the resignation of the chairman of the Lanarkshire Development Agency (LDA) Ian Livingstone. It accuses Livingstone of breaking quango rules by expressing a party political opinion when he recently signed a letter to a newspaper voicing concern at the separation of Scotland from England.

Livingstone will no doubt turn to the LDA's PR gurus for advice on what to do next who are none other than, er, Beattie Media.

BACKBYTES

THE home office has finally admitted it has wasted enough taxpayers' money – unofficial estimates up to £15m – on yet another computer debacle.

Five years after setting up Crams, the "Case Record and Management System" that was supposed to revolutionise probation work, officials have pulled the plug. The move follows revelations in the *Eye* that an independent assessment of Crams by University College London found it contained "defects which compromise the ability of users to perform their work". Basically, although it was hideously complex to operate, Crams couldn't even keep track of villains' aliases or whereabouts.

After a fourth update, when the system was still not millennium-bug resistant, the home office finally decided to stop throwing good money after bad on the Bull contract.

"Probation staff have been telling them for five years that the system was useless. If they had listened then, they would not have squandered so much money on consultants, training and the system itself," said Harry Fletcher, of the probation officers' union.

Crams is merely the latest in a series of unhappy and costly home office IT ventures. The German computer company Siemens Business Services has recently been penalised to the tune of more than £4.5m for recent fiascos at both the immigration headquarters in Croydon and the Passport Agency.

Meanwhile everyone is waiting to see how Quantum 2, the project to computerise the country's 140 jails, shapes up after Quantum 1 (cost £8m) was quietly suspended last year.

Ministers, it seems, are left with little faith in new technology. Fearing the damaging publicity which would surround any further computer cock-ups they have temporarily shelved their plans to introduce criminal record checks for job applicants. First, they want to make sure they have a computerised criminal records system that works.

THE attempts of the *Eye*'s favourite computer company EDS to help its clients cope with the millennium bug are predictably creating more problems than they are solving.

In July the Inland Revenue newspaper, the imaginatively entitled *ReveNews,* included a five-year review of the IR's contract with EDS and an examination of its Infrastructure 2000 (i2K) project. Two case studies illustrated some of the problems and frustrations experienced by staff at the implementation of i2K seen through the eyes of senior managers from the IR and EDS.

Tim and Alan's visit to Bradford revealed that: "The roll-out of i2K at Bradford was a huge exercise and was disruptive... The IR and EDS staff who did the implementation achieved a lot in a short time and there were many problems in the district that are not common in other offices. However there were some issues causing disappointment and frustration in the office at the time of our visit, five weeks after the installation."

All this honest management speak does not appear to have helped the IR's Bradford office solve its i/Y2K problems. More than a month after this article was published the IR was forced to apologise to a local firm which it falsely accused of failing to pay tax and national insurance before threatening to send round the bailiffs. The letter was sent during a system crash caused by the i2K project.

THE website for the Welsh national assembly has been plagued by problems since it was launched last year by Ron Davies.

At its unveiling in August the site crashed, putting Davies in the embarrassing position of having to call off a press conference.

A year later, and www.wales.gov.uk is still not at the cutting edge: the latest news item on its home page is a notice of the transfer of powers on 1 July, a poor show even considering the summer recess.

The website, along with all of the assembly's IT services, is managed under a private finance initiative with Siemens. And in the spirit of a truly devolved Wales the internet server for the assembly is located in in, er, Bath, England.

'Backbiter'

Violence Against Women

Why the Government has made violence against women a priority

Cabinet Office Fact Sheet

NOOKS and CORNERS

THE new straight road laid out south of the new Blackfriars Bridge thrown across the Thames by Robert Mylne was terminated in 1771 by a handsome obelisk in St George's Fields where, a few years later, Lord George Gordon would assemble the mob that created the most destructive and dangerous riot in British history (so far).

Around this obelisk a rond point or circus was laid out by George Dance junior, the architect and surveyor to the City of London and the master of the great John Soane. This was to be the centre of a smart new suburb for the Bridge House estate — south London's answer to Bath — but, in the way of such things, these ambitious plans were rather scaled down in execution. Even so, St George's Circus became the focus of a Late Georgian development with brick terraces placed along the streets radiating from the centre until the area declined and the obelisk was exiled to the grounds of the Bethlem Hospital.

Now Southwark council has put the obelisk back where it belongs, and very handsome it looks. But its setting has changed and not for the better: the only buildings by the Circus which still give a sense of the Georgian context are the two terraces of c.1820 facing each other at the top end of London Road. They are handsome terraces with several original shopfronts. That to the north ends with a pub - the Clarendon - on the corner of Borough Road: a concave facade which, alone, now recalls the original circus laid out by Dance. Yet this whole block is largely derelict, with most windows boarded up.

Why? Surely such buildings should be cherished, especially now the obelisk has been restored. Instead they have been neglected for years with the assistance of their owners. Most occupants and shop tenants have gone and the northern block was acquired by the University of the South Bank which hoped to replace it, presumably, with another of the red-tiled barracks in the style of the late James Stirling which sits alongside and which enhances the environment in London Road nearer to the Elephant and Castle. But now the buildings have been sold on to a developer. The fire insurance plaques have been unscrewed and the future looks bleak.

How can this be allowed to happen? Surely Southwark council would want to preserve decent, elegant Georgian survivors in a much abused part of the borough that it is now trying to enhance? They are listed buildings, after all. Well, no, actually. English Heritage has declined to propose them for listing because, presumably, such Late Georgian terraces are commonplace. But they soon won't be if they are not looked after.

Had they been listed (as they ought to be), they would doubtless figure in English Heritage's Buildings at Risk register. But they are still at risk and they are well worth keeping. Good, ordinary buildings can sometimes be as precious as celebrated masterpieces, and if Georgian buildings which are so important in their context can be allowed to go, can anything really be safe?

ANOTHER, rather larger Georgian building which remains a worry is Wentworth Woodhouse in Yorkshire. In fact, with its wings stretching for 600 feet and with 370 rooms, it is the largest country house in Britain.

The former seat of the Marquesses of Rockingham, it is a vast palace, both Baroque and Palladian. Unfortunately with open cast mining having wrecked the estate, the family moved out and it was let to the local authority, which let it to Sheffield Polytechnic. In 1988 the house was sold to Wensley Haydon-Baillie, "a personal friend of Prince Michael of Kent" who, last year, having been stopped from flogging two statues from the grade I listed building and having been arrested by the Customs and Excise, went bankrupt, leaving Wentworth Woodhouse in poor shape.

With the great house up for sale again, here was an opportunity, as the Georgian Group argued, to restore the fine rooms and make the place available to the public with the help of Heritage Lottery money - Sheffield, Rotherham and Barnsley are all nearby. But last April the Fitzwilliam Estates chose to sell Wentworth Woodhouse to Mr Clifford Newbold, "retired architect", who apparently paid more than the asking price of £1.5m and insists that he and his family are going to live in the thing. Better, I suppose, than Al-Ghazzi or Asil Nadir and the usual run of (apparently) rich tycoons whom we allow to buy up some of the finest country houses in the land.

The trouble is that the huge pile needs at least £10m spent on it over the next five years and English Heritage has put Wentworth Woodhouse on the Buildings at Risk register. Now I know nothing of Mr Newbold but find it surprising that any London architect could have that sort of money to spare. I note that he has denied reports that he has offered the Fitzwilliam Estate several million to buy out a restricted covenant which prevents commercial use. Good. But he has not indicated what he wants to do with the place, or how, or why. Meanwhile, the fabric continues to deteriorate. Are we back to square one?

'Piloti'

FIVE TV

Hidden Love (Channel 4)
Adult Lives (BBC2)
The Fast Show Night (BBC2)

WHEN the late Willie Whitelaw approved the plans for the new terrestrial broadcaster which eventually became Channel 4, it was made clear that the network was intended to provide programmes for minorities otherwise unserved by British TV.

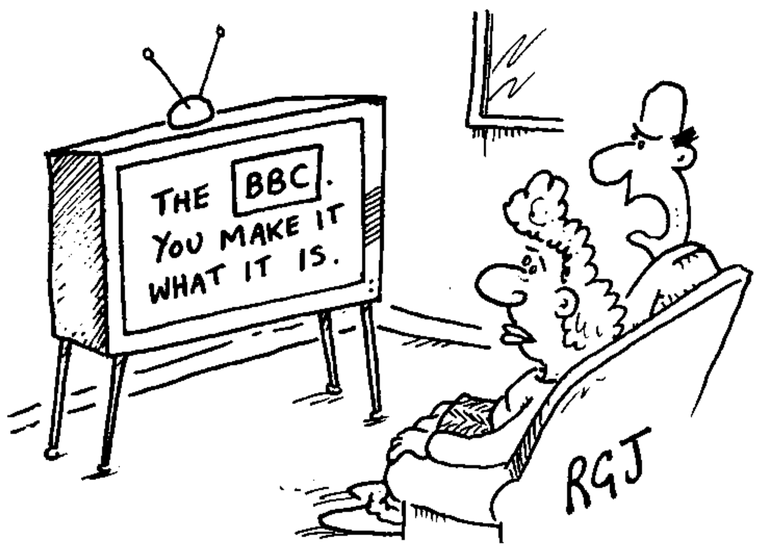
It's too late now to ask Whitelaw if the Tories specifically had in mind people who shag animals, but their golden moment in front of the box finally came this week. **Hidden Love** (Channel 4) — one of the fourth channel's seemingly inexhaustible supply of series about sex — finally let the cat out of the bag and opened the stable door on the question of bestiality in a documentary called *Animal Passions*.

In fact, the programme called the practice "zoophilia" — because that sounds as if it could be a Damien Hirst restaurant and therefore more Channel 4 — but labels were irrelevant. The dog was having its day. All over the country, zoophiliacs would be toasting the memory of Lord Whitelaw while feeding their lovers an extra spoonful of Pedigree Chum or bale of straw.

This pioneering report from pets' corner was preceded on Channel 4 by a documentary about Bunny Girls and, after allowing viewers *half* an hour to nip to the bathroom or whatever, Channel 4 followed through with a drama about a refugee in London turning to prostitution, the latest in its Acts Of Passions series of sexually explicit late-night plays, which slides satisfyingly into the slot left by Sex In The 21st Century, a recent series of sexually-explicit late-night plays.

All except that special group of dog-lovers who don't get to do displays at Cruft's are starting to feel some alarm at what is happening at Channel 4, where it increasingly seems that the schedules should be issued with a complimentary box of tissues.

The muttering in telly land — especially among his old rivals at the BBC — is that Michael Jackson is taking Channel 4 to hell in pursuit of ratings. The reality is more complicated and shows what a wily player Jackson has become. There is no doubt that Channel 4 has produced at least three of the most unpleasant and opportunistic programmes of the



*"How **dare** they blame us?"*

year if not the decade — *The Truth About The DJ Rapist*, the doc in which Paula Yates explained that Michael Hutchence was bringing himself off rather than doing himself in at the moment of death and now *Hidden Love* — and yet it would not entirely be a surprise if Channel 4 won most categories at next year's awards ceremonies.

Queer As Folk and *Dockers* will be strong contenders in the series and single drama categories. Molly Dineen's *Geri* is among the best documentaries of 1999 and *The Sopranos* should walk away with the imported shows award. Its cricket coverage must have a chance of the sports gongs and, with so few arts programmes around, even Matthew Collings's bloke-with-sideburns overview of modern art might be up for a doorstop as well.

In the past, television channels have tended to have a single aim: populist (ITV, BBC1) or serious (BBC2, Channel 4) or desperate (Channel 5, Sky One). It was therefore unlikely that any single network would produce five of the best and five of the worst programmes in the same year. So Jackson's Channel 4 — a strange kind of Reith & Butthead, Birt & Beavis double-act — is a fascinating innovation: the result of a deliberate policy of creating a small number of prestige projects and a large number of opportunistic ones. In a symbolic move, he recently abolished the arts department.

This matters because Wacko is the most influential executive in television. Over at BBC2, his protegee Jane Root now runs the show and is following the Jackson model closely. Last week's **Adult Lives** series — which reached its nadir on Wednesday night with lots of me-I'm-on-TV imbeciles describing their climaxes — was a sister season to C4's various heavy-breathers.

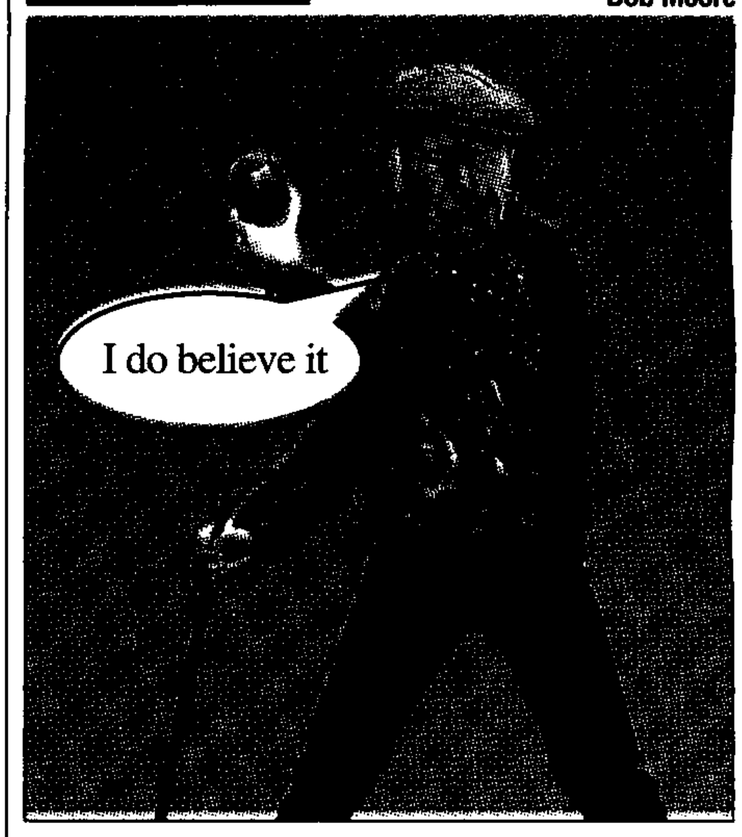
The theme night — another Wacko fixation — now seems to be an almost weekly event on BBC2, with the subjects seeming ever less worthy of such treatment. It used to be said jokingly that John Peel was the Queen Mum of pop but the quip became literal with a reverential four-hour tribute. And you can see the point of giving Monty Python a retrospective evening... but **The Fast Show**? The choice of Peel and *The Fast Show* demonstrates the tendency of the BBC to overexploit any successful asset it has.

There has been an understandable tendency to take the intellectual temperature of television by checking how stupid the populist channels are getting. But the doctors of the box should really look at what — for reasons of commercial pressure and intellectual fashion — the upmarket channels are doing.

'Square Eyes'

SPLIT personalities

Bob Moore



Cliff Richard Wilson

JUST FANCY THAT

Tuesday pm Sept 7
BBC1 10.00 *100 Years Young*
People who have reached the grand old age of 100 reveal the secrets of their longevity.
BBC2 9.50 *Adult Lives*
The story of a 64-year-old... recently acquiring a lover approx. half her age!!
Channel 4 10.00 *Hidden Love*
A film examing sex and love over 60.

Wednesday am Sept 8
Age Concern issues report complaining that there are no programmes aimed at the elderly (who watch a lot of TV).

Clever scheduling

6.5 million
Audience for Trevor McDonald on News at Ten

3.5 million
Audience for Trevor McDonald on Tonight, at ten

MEDIA NEWS

THERE has been much support for Belfast-based hack Ed Moloney, who is resisting attempts by Met commissioner-to-be John Stevens to make him cooperate with the investigation into the murder of solicitor Pat Finucane a decade ago.

Moloney, a correspondent for Dublin's *Sunday Tribune*, is unwilling to give Stevens his notes of an interview with William Stobie, who claims that he was a special branch informer at the time of Finucane's death and warned his handlers of the impending attack by UDA terrorists.

This will run and run, but one curiosity is the sympathetic treatment of Moloney's dilemma by *Channel 4 News* and various Irish-American groups who simultaneously continue to argue that Finucane was actually killed by a secret committee (called, cleverly, The Committee) – whose existence was first "revealed" eight years ago in a Channel 4 programme which has been keeping lawyers busy ever since.

The documentary, produced by Ulster hack Sean McPhilemy, purported to expose a secret group of 24 unionist businessmen and politicians who sat round a table and decided whom to assassinate. Names of the unlucky victims were then passed to terrorists, many of them serving RUC and army members, who carried out the hits.

McPhilemy recently expanded on his allegations in a book, published by the American firm Roberts Rhinehart. As we reported in *Eye* 979, this has provoked a torrent of libel writs from, among others, David Trimble MP and the former RUC assistant chief constable Trevor Forbes. But McPhilemy stands by his story and has in turn sued the *Sunday Times* for casting doubt on it.

McPhilemy's principal source and witness is one Jim Sands, a maverick unionist who was filmed in silhouette for the original documentary. He convinced not only McPhilemy but also then C4 boss Michael Grade, who defended the programme to the hilt, even when it landed the channel with a £75,000 fine for contempt of court.

Alas! In last Sunday's *Observer* Sands admitted that his Committee story was pure fabrication – invented "to make journalists look stupid".

And not only journalists. Next month Michael Grade is publishing his autobiography, and in view of the time and money he spent supporting McPhilemy's film it would be surprising if he fails to mention it. It would be equally surprising if his comments don't add further to the seven-figure legal bill which the Committee saga has run up so far.

The title of Grade's memoirs, fittingly enough, is *It Seemed Like a Good Idea At The Time*.

I-SKY BAD TASTE

"Police searching for missing Laura Kane yesterday appealed for help from 40,000 soccer fans at a premiership match. Detectives put out an appeal over the Tannoy at Sunderland's sell-out clash with Coventry City. A further plea for help was flashed up on the electronic scoreboard before the kick-off of the live Sky Sports game."

ROBIN PERRIE
The Sun

GOOD news too from BBC Broadcast. The "Broadcast Accommodation Project" at Broadcasting House has at last been completed. Time to see what's in it for the licence-payers who have paid £40m for it, as well as for the suits who'll be based there until Greg Dyke finds out how much money they're wasting and sacks them all.

Each suit will have a desk, or "homebase", as it's called in the lavish brochure that launches the "new workspace". They also get to see their mission statements on electronic message boards and relish the modern art works on the walls – all for sale, natch, with prices starting at £1,000.

There's a "club area" too for "spontaneous discussions" (falling ratings, financial crises) and there's a "touchdown area" where "colleagues dropping in from the regions", totally unused to sophisticated luxury like this, can be hidden tastefully from sight for a spot of "short stay working".

Even more revolutionary perhaps is the "hub", or "social centre where we have gathered all our life support services: coffee, fax, copier and stationery. This is also the place to chat informally with colleagues".

There's also a price to be paid by the few production staff left at BH, who are not managers and who cannot use Broadcast's luxury space. Producers *from Desert Island Discs*, *Home Truths*, phone-ins and travel features have had to double up to make room for the new suite. Nor can they take advantage of the air-conditioning system incorporated in the design. Thanks to the high charges levied by Broadcast, they can't afford to turn it on.

EVEN by her own standards it was a bizarre moment when Northern Ireland secretary Mo Mowlam failed to meet Luciano Pavarotti, who had flown to Belfast at her invitation for an open air weekend gig at Stormont Castle.

Hoards of hacks and the even more crucial camera crews were duly told to report to the steps of a cathedral where Pavarotti planned a rehearsal session with his locally recruited orchestra.

Pavarotti's car eventually arrived and he plodded out and entered the building ignoring cries from snappers for a quick pose.

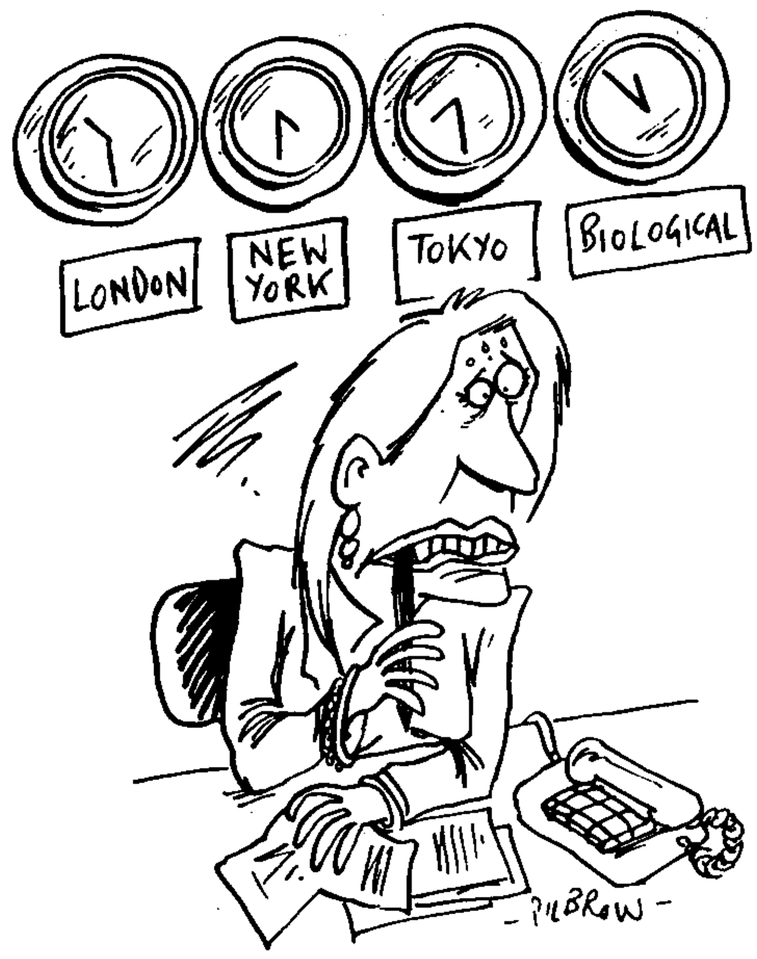
At this point Mowlam stepped forward to welcome her guest. Sadly, he had no idea who she was and promptly walked past her, refusing to speak.

As she stood looking simultaneously emotional, confused and crushed, her minders pursued his minders, demanding that he come back and rescue the publicity stunt. Mowlam, who had apparently been mistaken for a groupie by Pav's men, was then led away to her now distant car, looking visibly ill and muttering to baffled hacks: "I did not get to meet Mr Pavarotti. He is rehearsing now, which is acceptable."

She subsequently missed the concert as well, a rare failure to bond with luvviedom.

POOR old BBC Worldwide, the corporation's commercial and publishing arm, lurches from one crisis to another.

In the past three years ceaseless "reorganisations" have seen the departure of almost everyone who knows anything about books, and the recruitment of sales people from the drinks and baked-bean



industries, in the mistaken belief that they would be able to increase the Beeb's share of the book and video market.

Just when it seemed that things couldn't get any worse, a sex-scandal has struck. Like many companies, BBC Worldwide instructs its IT department to look out for any computer terminal that uses up more than its fair share of megabytes, in case anyone is downloading hard porn from the internet. But one executive was either too stupid or desperate to care, and when the IT wallahs recently checked his computer they found that he had been downloading particularly charming depictions of bestiality.

Will Rupert Gavin, BBC Worldwide's boss, order a cover-up to spare the corporation further embarrassment? Or will he order the miscreant to see a psychiatrist or walk the plank? Watch this space.

IT'S a classic tabloid story – a couple caught bonking in the bogs at a celebrity bash are thrown out of the party for lewd behaviour.

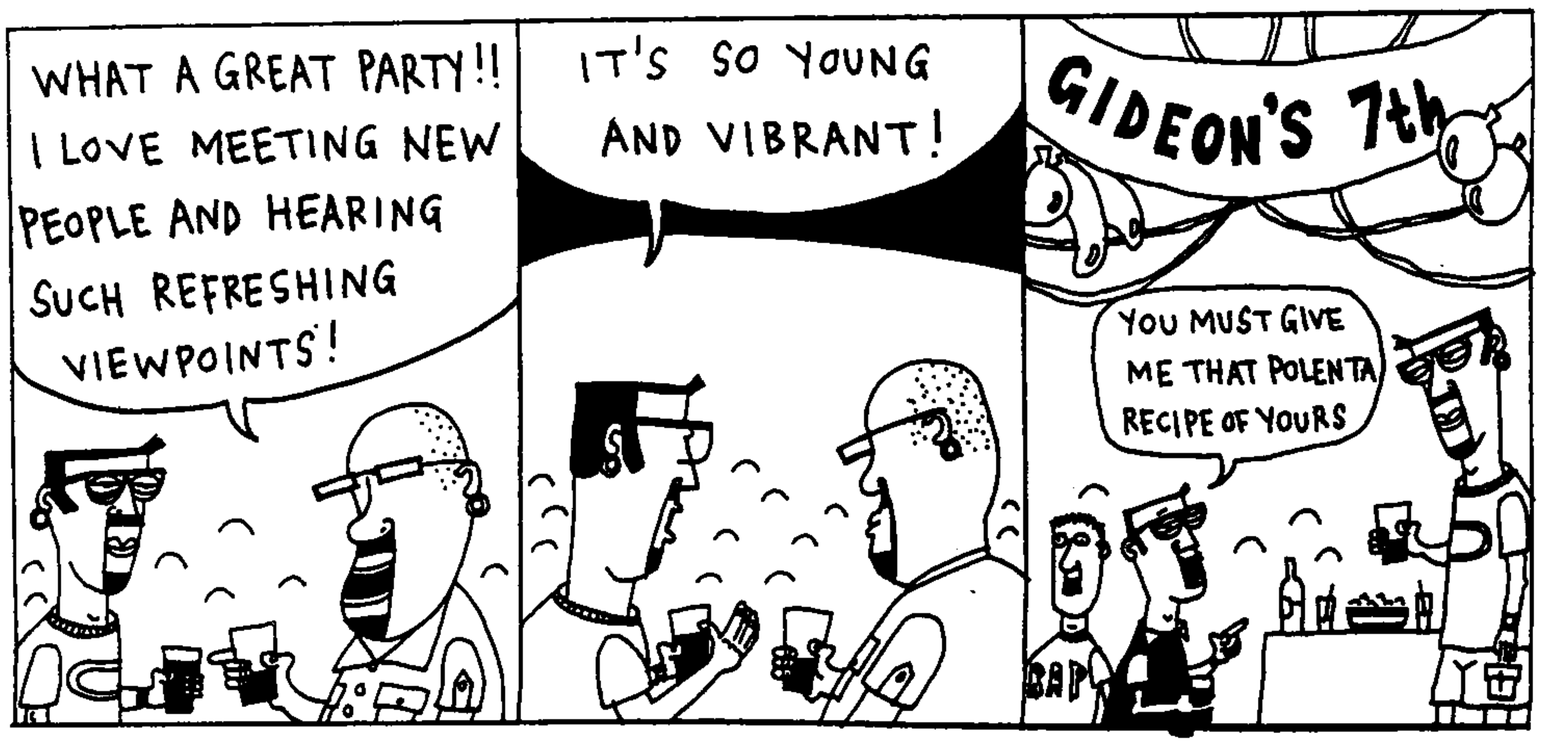
To spice up the story, the pair were ejected from the ladies' loos at a party to mark the end of the Edinburgh Television Festival, where one of the debates attended by TV executives had been headed "Dramatic sex – how far do you go?" (It concluded that audiences prefer risky sex.)

The media presence made it inevitable the bonking tale would get out, and sure enough telly types from L!VE TV passed it on to their Mirror Group colleagues at the *Daily Record* who ran the story on 1 September under the headline: "Guards flush out toilet love pair."

The Murdoch press, which would not normally object to reporting a toilet tumble, kept mum about the whole affair. It was a coincidence that the party in question was a cartoon launch hosted by Elisabeth Murdoch's BSkyB.

IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON

KNIFE & PACKER


WHAT A GREAT PARTY!! I LOVE MEETING NEW PEOPLE AND HEARING SUCH REFRESHING VIEWPOINTS!
IT'S SO YOUNG AND VIBRANT!
GIDEON'S 7th
YOU MUST GIVE ME THAT POLENTA RECIPE OF YOURS
BAP

NOT since the "elevation" of the ex-Birtist Mathew Bannister to a quiet corner where he can do no more harm has there been such a strong feelgood factor among radio producers at White City.

Behind it is the growing realisation by those who were responsible for the witless changes to the Radio Four schedule that the great experiment has failed and it is now time to revert to old ways.

Yesterday in Parliament has been restored on FM, *Today in Parliament* and *The Week in Westminster* are back in their old slots; James Boyle has begun the long march to the sidelines (he was passed over as director of radio last January) and there are plans to remove the unfunny comedians currently cluttering up the airwaves.

The commissioning process itself has returned to its former pattern. Producers have been told they can bid once again for longer series of programmes – the shorter runs commissioned under the new rules now deemed far too expensive to be practical.

DOING THE ROUNDS

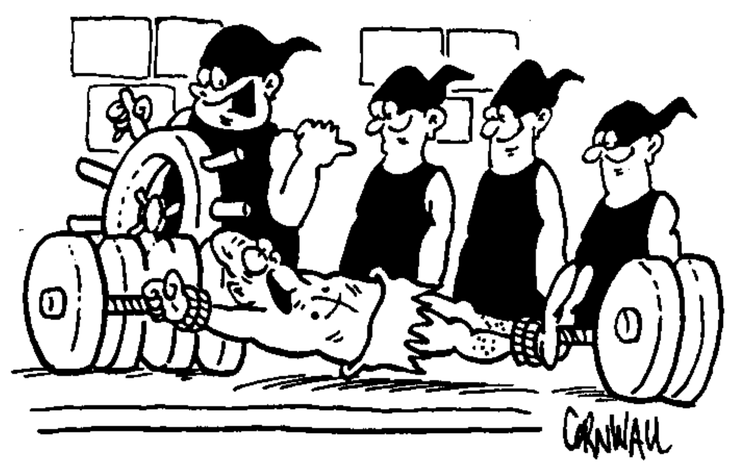
COMPARE and contrast these headlines from the *Independent*. "Doctor suspended and 1,000 women re-called in cancer treatment scandal" (front page headline, 28 July, 1998) and "How one doctor's cancer errors have put 1,000 women at risk" (28 July, 1998, page 7) with "Hospital dispute lead to cancer recall" (10 September, 1999, page 9). A slight shift in emphasis perhaps?

The shameful treatment of Graham Barker, a consultant gynaecologist from St George's Hospital, Tooting, who took voluntary leave (and was not suspended) in March 1998, was first highlighted in the *Eye* in April under the headline "A scandal that wasn't".

The dispute boiled down to a difference in techniques for colposcopy, a treatment used for women with abnormal cervical smears. Mr Barker favoured a more conservative approach, doing fewer excision biopsies and taking thinner tissue samples. His "colleague", Mr Desmond Barton, favoured more biopsies and deeper samples as outlined in colposcopy guidelines introduced in 1996. There is still some debate as to whether these guidelines might result in the over-treatment of women with minor smear abnormalities but Barton clearly felt Barker had a case to answer and an investigation was launched.

In July 1998 the trust recalled 1,168 women, more than 600 of whom were reexamined and rebiopsied. The "scandal" attracted widespread publicity, caused huge anxiety and cost more than £300,000 of health service money. And, as Barker had maintained all along from an audit of his private work, the investigation found no statistically significant evidence of an increase in cervical cancer or pre-cancer in his patients.

This hugely embarrassing revelation prompted Andrew Dillon, then chief executive, to order a second investigation to scrutinise the results of the first one. The "scrutiny panel" announced its findings last week. Yes, Mr Barker's treatment was more conservative than nationally agreed standards and no, there was no significant increase in the rate of cancer or pre-cancer.



"Mind if some students check you out?"

After 17 months of gardening leave on full pay, Mr Barker has now been invited back as "a key member" of the new colposcopy team at St George's under the proviso that he undergoes some as yet unspecified additional training. This is fine by Mr Barker, who clearly recognises the duty all doctors have to keep skills and knowledge up to date. What he is less happy about is the fact that, as MD pointed out in April, the fiasco could have been avoided.

As one adviser to the scrutiny panel put it: "The whole sorry tale was just a dreadful mess. Dillon genuinely felt he was acting in the way that John Roylance (the inactive chief executive struck off after the Bristol cardiac disaster) should have, but had St George's had a service with a culture of audit, quality assurance and good clinical leadership it would never have come to that."

In essence if the trust had been auditing Mr Barker's work prospectively (ie as he went along), it would have seen there was no case to answer. Mr Barker is now considering whether to take legal action against the trust and the *Independent* newspaper.

The real scandal is not just the internecine professional rivalry that destroys careers and tears hospitals apart (St George's also has two A&E consultants and two colo-rectal surgeons who very much dislike each other), but the fact that the NHS has no money for quality assurance. At present audit is done by isolated enthusiasts on the backs of envelopes. "Scandals" arise because a doctor tries to extract a few figures out of a pile of notes for a research project and discovers something that doesn't look quite right. Before it can be statistically verified by someone vaguely numerate, it hits the press.

The Royal Brompton may be next to take the press to task after, as MD again predicted, an external audit of its paediatric cardiac surgical work showed that the surgeons were performing well. It was certainly not another Bristol, as the Sunday Times implied. But the external assessors were amazed to find that "one of the world's leading cardiac centres" doesn't have a computerised database allowing the surgeons to compare each other's figures as they operate. As a result, it took several months to rebut the allegations of poor results by the anonymous whistleblower.

In Mr Dobson's "First Class" NHS very few doctors have any idea how they're doing. As a result, doctors get wrongly accused and patients aren't protected from very poor service. At present your best bet is to ask several doctors where they'd want to their family to be treated. At the Brompton I found many doctors who would be happy for their own children to have heart surgery there. In the seven years since the *Eye* exposed the Bristol heart scandal, I have spoken to many cardiologists, anaesthetists and surgeons who knew of the problems back in 1992 and before. Not one of them would have allowed their own children to have heart surgery in Bristol then, and all would now. Until we have the money and obligation for open quality assurance across the NHS, that's the best recommendation I can give.

● THE Down's Syndrome Association is deeply unhappy at the Brompton report's conclusion that there was no evidence of discrimination against Down's babies and children. It has sent 16 detailed case studies to the *Eye* and to the second phase of the inquiry which, at the very least, indicate serious failures of communication. The DSA believes the allegations of discrimination are not unproven until these cases are analysed. Watch this space.

M.D

DOWN ON THE FARM

PITY the poor British beef farmer, squeezed on every side by BSE-mania, soaring regulatory costs, collapsing prices, hysterical German hygiene freaks, T-bone steak-banning ministers and an ever shrinking number of rural slaughterhouses.

Joanna Wheatley lovingly rears prime beef cattle on her flower-rich organic holding near Maidenhead. When recently she had nine top-quality young beasts ready for the table, she had to send them all the way to Devon to be slaughtered. The government's remorseless anti-small abattoir policy has left no organically-qualified slaughterhouse within 150 miles of Berkshire.

Unfortunately Lloyds Maunders is one of the big boys, waxing fat on the closure of its smaller competitors. So when the buyer saw Mrs Wheatley's prime beasts arrive, in the pink of condition, he cheerfully classified them as of the very lowest quality-grade on the list, and ruled that she should be paid accordingly. For the past three years, when she has sent beasts from the same parentage to the same abattoir in the same condition, they have been given top quality grading. But this year, instead of the £6 to £7,000 she was expecting, she received £3,000 less. For one animal she was paid a derisory £300, instead of the £800 it might have fetched at market.

When, disbelievingly, she consulted the Meat and Livestock Commission's chart, classifying cattle quality from top to bottom, she saw the lowest grade, on which she had been paid, consisted of "spent cows" – old milkers which have passed their useful life. Yet now she was being paid the same for hand-reared prime organic beef.

When she rang to protest, and suggested that her beef should be inspected for a second opinion, she was told the animals had already been cut up and sent out. When she protested "what about hanging? Surely you can't have sent out prime organic beef without it being properly hung?", she was told there was no need for that. Consumers didn't necessarily expect meat to be hung these days. If she wanted to quibble about the grading of her cattle, she should have come down to Devon with them herself, seen them through slaughter and then waited around until they were classified the next day.

When she rang the Meat and Livestock Commission, supposed to be the champion of the industry and good quality meat, it expressed sympathy and said it couldn't imagine how beef cattle could possibly be classified in such a low grade. But, unfortunately, since Lloyd Maunders did not use MLC inspectors, but only "inspectors trained to MLC standards", there was nothing it could do. Perhaps next time she should try to find an abattoir which employed MLC inspectors. Mrs Wheatley couldn't help noticing that, of the comparative pittance she had received for her beasts, £46.17 had been deducted for "MLC levy". Certainly this represented services not exactly rendered.

It seems that similar "classification difficulties", as they are called by the National Livestock Marketing Alliance, are being reported by a growing number of small farmers.

"You haven't spent the money we got for the sheep?"

'Even Newer Muckspreader'

SIGNAL FAILURES

WHEN Britain's rail services were entrusted to a ragbag of private bidders it was politically vital that each new franchise came with a few lollipops. Promises of new trains and new services helped calm the critics and prompted delirious excitement in some Tory newspapers before the 1997 election.

Industry watchers were less convinced, as they knew how long it takes to order, build and test a train. "I reckon that Gatwick Express is close to running out of time," wrote Roger Ford in *Modern Railways* magazine in February 1997, concerned that franchise owner National Express had promised a fleet of new trains by April 1999. Five months after that deadline, those trains are still not in public use.

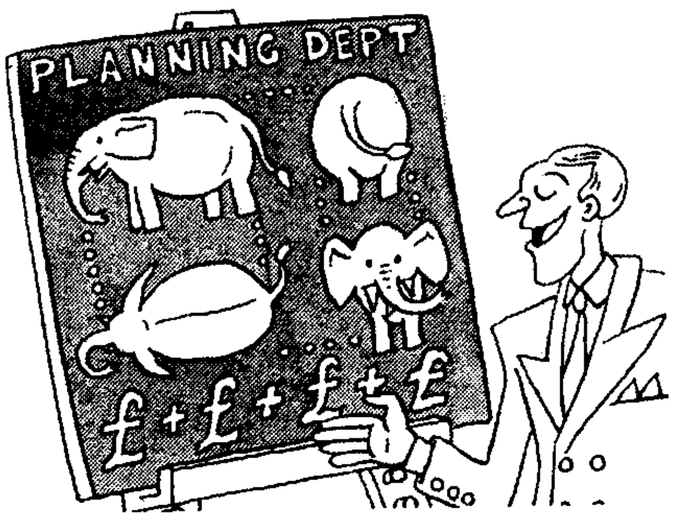
The bitter pill of Connex's double franchise awards was sugared by the promise of 16 new trains on its south-eastern franchise by 1 April 1999. In September 1999 commuters have yet to ride in one new train, let alone 16. Prism Rail also promised too much and gained some positive headlines, but the kind old Office of passenger rail franchising (Opraf) happily accepted its excuses when it became obvious that slam-door trains would be on LTS Rail (or C2C, as the misery line is now renamed) long after they were meant to be replaced by new trains in November 1999.

At least these franchises have ordered new trains. Great North Eastern Railway, on the other hand, made loud noises about new tilting trains (*Eyes passim*) but has delivered nothing.

The best that impoverished Cardiff Railway (another Prism franchise) could promise was direct services from Pontypridd to Manchester and Portsmouth, but three years later even that paltry commitment has been dropped. Cardiff's franchise agreement, like many others, was so thin it had to be padded out with passenger's charter commitments – raising the "punctuality target" from 90 to 92 percent and the "reliability target" from 99 to 99.5 percent. These clever promises suggested there would be fewer delays and cancellations while committing the company to nothing at all; by now the targets have been raised but Cardiff's punctuality and reliability have fallen below the original targets, let alone the new ones.

'Dr B. Ching'

ROTTEN BOROUGHS



OUT OF TOON

REVENGE is sour on Newcastle-upon-Tyne city council. Supporters of the grotesque plan for a superstore at Walkergate (see *Eye* 983) have been rallying their forces now that the plan has been kicked out by environment secretary John Prescott.

Chief among the supporters is Newcastle East MP Nick Brown, the agriculture minister. Brown's close friend Kevan Jones is a councillor for the Walkergate area, as is Barney Rice, the man who said Prescott's department of environment, transport and regions should be broken up, er, because he didn't like Prescott's decision.

Seven out of nine councillors for the three wards closest to Walkergate are ardent supporters of the scheme. They include the mayor of Newcastle, John Cunningham, a dear friend of Freddy Shepherd, whose vast property company stood to make the biggest gains from the development. Cunningham is an enthusiastic supporter of Newcastle United (chairman: Freddy Shepherd) and can be spotted regularly in the chairman's box at St James's Park.

What of those councillors who opposed Walkergate? Les Russell, former chairman of the planning committee, and David Slesenger, another committee member, made their objections quite plain. Both were deselected before last year's council elections.

Another forthright opponent was Sir Jeremy Beecham, former council leader and current chair of the local government association. Along with other opponents of Walkergate, Beecham has been the subject of rumours and smears from unknown sources associating him with speculation in the Shields Road area — site of an alternative shopping centre plan. The anti-Semitic tone of the smears was so blatant that Brown wrote to Sir Jeremy specifically to dissociate himself and his office from them.

DIRTY WORDS

DOWN the road in Durham, meanwhile, Prescott has disappointed campaigners who were trying to stop another monstrous development — also called Walkergate (no relation).

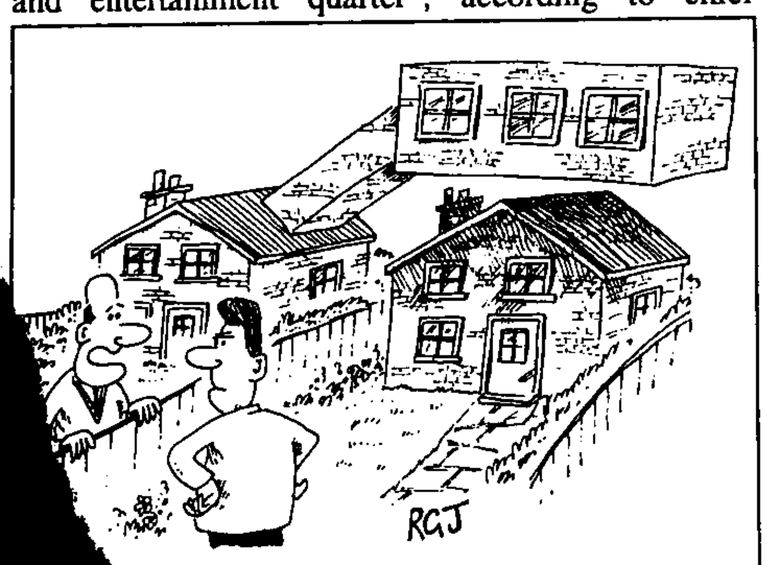
The Labour city council thinks that an eight-screen cinema, bars, restaurants, nightclub and bingo hall are just what the townscape of Durham, with its boring cathedral, castle, riverside and world heritage status, needs. And Prescott, at the end of August, agreed with them.

The council and developers Amec are now eager to press on with Walkergate, which, with the "Durham Millennium City" scheme will create a "new cultural and entertainment quarter", according to chief executive Colin Shearsmith. Less enthusiastic are those living near the schemes, who fear that more bars and a giant nightclub are just what a city that already has more than its share of boozing and brawling problems does not need.

Fed-up residents can at least get some amusement from an entertaining display in the window of a local cobbler's shop which accuses the council of all manner of corruption and features prominently a letter on House of Commons paper from Durham MP Gerry Steinberg to Labour city councillor Bill Kellett.

"I was absolutely staggered to read... your remarks [in a local newspaper]," fumes Steinberg. "Nothing but scurrilous... publicity appalling... you should seriously consider your position... in the Labour party." What dreadful crime had Kellett committed to bring the party into such disrepute? He had, as chair of a local parish council, responded to entirely accurate complaints from local shopkeepers that their council-owned properties had been sold to a developer for at least £500,000 less than their market value with the words: "We are talking about integrity and honesty. It does fill me with a lot of suspicion. We should ask for police advice."

So why is talking about integrity and honesty so offensive in Durham these days?



Extension? What about our extension?"

● **SERVING the community is all the rage in the Labour group at Doncaster council – but not quite in the way most voters would prefer. Yet another former Donny councillor, Tony Sellars, has been arrested on suspicion of false accounting (expenses fiddling). He is already asking Labour party members if they will write character references to the court so he may secure community service rather than a prison sentence if charged and convicted, as did his colleague Steve Judge (see *Eye* 983). Last week Sellars' brother Terry received a three-month suspended sentence on similar charges, so ending his career on the squeaky-clean, beyond reproach, new-look council.**

JUST FANCY THAT

To The Occupier (Owner if empty)
97 BALFOUR ROAD
LABOUR
N5 2HE

Islington Council Tax form

LATE FOR SCHOOL

A COMPUTER crash in the schools admissions department of Labour-held Haringey council means that at least 40 children have missed the crucial first weeks of their secondary education.

Youngsters on the waiting list have not even been allocated a school because the computer system went down *two months* ago, on 19 July, and has not been fixed. The council says it has been too hard up to replace the ageing system. Places will supposedly — but by no means certainly — be allocated by the end of this week, two weeks after the beginning of term in most Haringey schools.

SLICK AS A BRICK

BLUNDERS by Liverpool city council mean its planned £125m Millennium National Discovery Park – mainly funded by public grants — will not be built. Instead a private £160m shopping and flats development will rise on the site. Or will it?

In July the high court ruled that council officials had acted in "excess of authority" in granting a modest £26,000 option on the Chevasse Park site — worth millions — to the Walton Group, chaired by ex-brickie Bill Davies, in 1996. But last week that ruling was overturned on appeal, leaving the way open for Walton after all.

Davies — aka "Mr Merseyside" — is a self-made Scouse millionaire who recently made it on to the *Sunset Times* "Rich List". Allegedly "saving" Aintree race course in 1972, he flogged it to Ladbrokes 10 years later. He owns significant prime sites in Liverpool, but for a property developer he doesn't seem to do much property developing. He is good, however, at collecting grants.

He took over the grandiose Old Post Office in Whitechapel — in the heart of the city centre — in 1982. It has remained derelict ever since. Ten years ago he acquired Exchange Flags, which was supposed to become a complex of luxury flats, restaurants and offices. Despite substantial injections of public sector dosh, most of the buildings are still empty.

Spookily, the person mainly responsible for granting Davies his land option in the first place was John Liddle, the council's development and environmental services director. Liddle resigned in June to become chief executive of Rosemary Millennium — the quango in charge of overseeing the Chevasse Park development.

Pseuds Corner

Painter, inventor and architect, Leonardo *da Vinci* was the ultimate Renaissance Man in every sense of the word.

Primarily remembered for his "Last Supper" and "Mona Lisa", he was also an accomplished musician, designer and scientist.

In the same way Rolfe East have shown versatility in the local property market, developing new and better ways for buyers and sellers to move house.

Advertisement

Births

BERENGER. Mélisande-à-gogo Fréné-gonde, born at 12.39 on Sunday 1st August 1999, beautiful daughter of Richard and Harriet. Welcome, little one.

Guardian

"The concept of FREEDOM is natural for fragrance as it has come to represent the true essence of individuality and the ability to choose for oneself," said Tommy Hilfiger. "A fragrance responds differently on every person, just as freedom has a different meaning to everyone."

Advertisement

Every person who loves Brighton gets a fierce thrill of almost sexual possessiveness when, having escaped the armpits of London, the soft underbelly of Surrey gives way to the plushness of the Downs – concealing, then revealing, glistening Brighton itself, the glinting pink jewel in the crown of Sussex. It is typical of Brighton that it should choose as its setting the county of Sussex – unlike certain other Home Counties, so lovely, so soft, and relatively unblemished by small minds and sour overspill. And also, it's got "sex" in it.

JULIE BURCHILL
Guardian

Anish Kapoor is an internationally acclaimed artist who came to prominence in the early 1980s. His sculptures invoke the sublime and provoke an intense spiritual and physical response. His work confronts us with the opposite of comfort: threatening chasms, unspeakable emptiness. But it is a deceptive emptiness, open to every possibility, to every individual viewer's experience and fantasy; an emptiness which cannot possibly be measured by our dazed senses.

From a brochure describing a "site-specific installation" on the site of the former Baltic Flour Mills, Gateshead

CONTRIBUTORS: C. Crotty, Brian Williamson, Anon, Graham Warren, Colin & Andrea Mullaney.

£10 paid for entries

The Modern Picnic

Letters

Spanish practices?

Sir,

Portillo has a very short memory. I can well remember him being shafted by Stephen Twigg.

NICK THORN,

Oxford.

Fiction friction

Sir,

I am (was) an avid reader and admirer of Private Eye's page Rotten Boroughs and it was pleasing to see that various shady practices by local politicians come under the spotlight, plus some of the humorous and pompous attitudes of councillors were shown to be so.

However, I would draw your attention to a piece written about myself in Eye 983. The article in question was total fiction, apparently lifted from the infamous South London Press:

I have not formed an organisation called "South London Union of True Socialists".

I was at the House of Commons on the day in question along with colleagues giving evidence to the Joint Select Committee on the Draft Local Government and Standards Bill.

I was not apprehended by a security guard and shown the door.

Local government and indeed central government do not need fiction to highlight their pomposity, and sometimes downright sleaze, as there is enough copy about local councils to fill your columns without resorting to fiction.

COUN RON STOCKBRIDGE,

Lewisham.

Own goal

Sir,

Could the £18.99 hardback edition of the autobiography by Sir Alex Ferguson published by "Harper Collins" that you refer to on page 25 be at all related to the £18.99 hardback edition of the autobiography by Sir Alex Ferguson published by Hodder & Stoughton reviewed some two-and-a-half inches to the left of the wee article on page 24? I think we should be told. Whilst it is easy to imagine God's Greatest Living Scot meriting two publishers, you should be wary of insulting the man.

[Yes. "Egg on face" time for the Eye. It is a Hodder book and this was our mistake. Ed.]

Furthermore, I take violent exception to your cartoon about the Glasgow Groucho Club, and particularly so as the character on the right is recognisably my baby sister. I know where you live. And I suspect you of being an Arsenal supporter. You'll know me when you see me...

NAME AND ADDRESS WITHHELD.

Chorus of disapproval

Sir,

"Moore has trained several singers at the English National Opera in the past but is not doing so at present." (Opera News, Eye 984.)

In fact, I am at present training a total of 10 singers currently contracted to English National Opera – as a simple phone call to the company would instantly verify.

Given the abundance of such fanciful misinformation contained in your recent paragraphs relating to myself and Mr Christiansen, would it be presumptuous to assume that your source has absolutely no idea what he's talking about?

GERALD MARTIN MOORE,

London N4.

Down to earth advice

Sir,

If it is the case that the vast majority of air accidents are caused by pilots (Eye 984, Letters), then the solution is simple: don't let the buggers board the aircraft in the first place. On reflection, it might also be sensible to ban drivers from their cars, surgeons from operating theatres, etc.

Yours Health and Safetilly,
JOHN BERTOUCHE,

Via e-mail.

Lookalike

Sun Editor **Mr Potato Head**

Sir,

Have you noticed the amazing similarity between Sun Editor David Yelland and Mr Potato Head?

Are they related? I think we should be told.

NAME & ADDRESS WITHHELD.

Flea pit in their ear

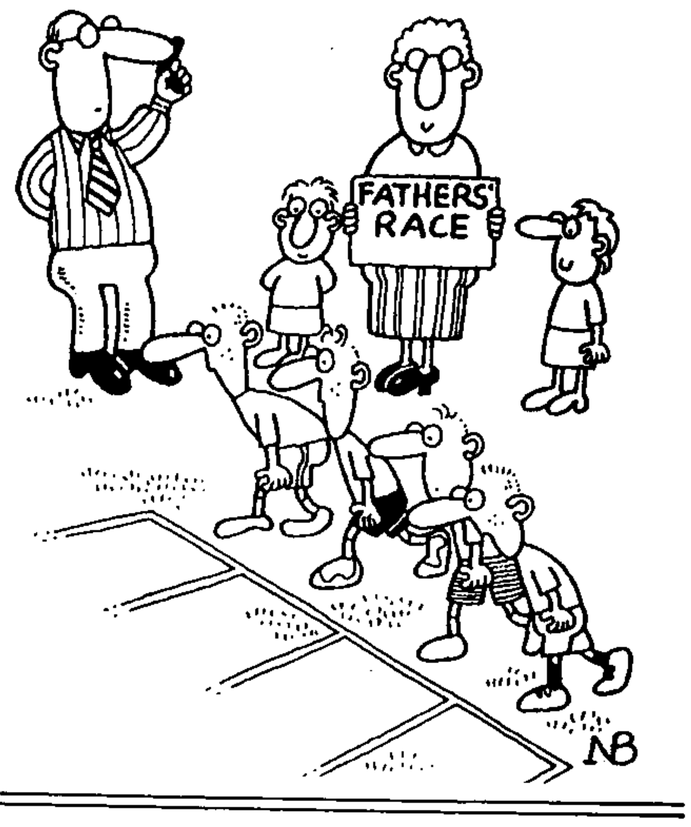
Sir,

Your Nooks & Corners exposé of Worthing borough council's handling of the long-running saga of the Dome Complex has cut the council to the quick. There are many other sides to the picture portrayed in Piloti's piece. Not least of these is the undisputed fact that since the new Conservative administration regained political control of the borough council in its stunning May coup, we have agreed to sell the listed complex — which is recognised to be the best surviving example of a silent era movie cinema in the country — to the local Preservation Trust for a modest £10. The Trust is proposing to complete this deal in the next few weeks, provided the Heritage Lottery Fund agrees to bank roll its visionary plans to restore this historic seafront landmark at a cost of nearly £5m.

The scale of this intended investment by the Preservation Trust will perhaps give your readers a clue as to the dilemma faced by the borough council over many years in deciding what to do for the best. The council has spent more than £350,000 trying to keep the building from falling into total disrepair while it searched for a well heeled White Knight to secure the future of this important piece of the nation's Edwardian heritage.

Yours faithfully,
COUNCILLOR TIM DICE,

Leader, Worthing Borough Council.



Birds 'n' the Bushell

Sir,

Further to Dan Porsa's letter (984), I happen to have seen the unencrypted transmission of Television X the night Garry Bushell was on and you might be interested to learn that the reason for his appearance was to promote his own programme. Entitled "Bushell's Babes", it showed the hairy pundit being treated to lapdances by a series of presumably well-paid strippers. While the only person who could possibly find this erotic is Mr Bushell himself (and I'd love to know what his beautiful, talented, non-gormless wife thought), the show did have two redeeming features: Garry's mouth remained closed for almost the entire programme and, more importantly, he kept his clothes on.

Yours sincerely,
KEVIN O'REILLY,

Via e-mail.

True porn

Sir,

Far be it from me to defend journalists willy-nilly. However, I feel that I had to come to the aid of A.A. Gill, whom you described as being present at a porn shoot, as shown on the German late-night show Wa(h)re Liebe. I happened to have seen this episode (I am a consenting adult over 18, living in Germany, and besides VOX — owned by Murdoch — is not exclusively naughty, in fact a bit like Channel 5 in many ways). The Great Man of Letters had a perfectly viable (if thin) excuse for being there. They explained that Gill was under commission from GQ magazine to write an article on what it was like to direct a porn film. He did rather seem to be enjoying himself, however, especially the blow-job scene.

Moreover your translation of Wa(h)re Liebe as "True Love?" is perfectly correct, but misses the subtlety (no honestly, I know how hard it is to believe from Germans) of the title. It is a play on words:

Ware is a product or commodity
Wahre is True
Liebe is Love

In any case, what were you lot doing, up so late, watching such filth?

Yours faithfully,
JOHN BARRETT,

Neuss, Germany.

Love story

Sir,

Nine years ago, aged 65 and lonely, I advertise in Eye Love. Unlike many of the ads mine was not obscene. It brought me a good friend of my own who became my wife. She is a jewel. When I succumbed to one of the ailments of increasing she proved to be more steadfast than anyone h right to expect. Not all who advertise in Eye L are irresponsible lechers.

Yours sincerely,
NAME AND ADDRESS WITHHELD.

I-SPY

***Athens* (submitted by Dr Amindra)**

***Paris* (submitted by Roger Croston)**

£10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Moore the merrier

Sir,

I hope your recent correspondent's complaint about the contents of the Eye beyond page 30 was tongue in cheek. Since quitting corporate life to work independently seven years ago, I have found the quality of services provided by those who advertise in Eye Help to be excellent. Obviously the place to find people who think AND who have a sense of humour!

And just in case anyone is interested, yes, the Eye Love ads can be very successful. From personal experience, I can assure the ladies that you "encounter" a much more interesting range of unattached men than through the Sunday Times, even in the North. My new partner regularly drinks a toast to Ian Hislop!

So perhaps your correspondent will be lucky, too...

With all good wishes,
JAN MOORE,

Huddersfield, West Yorks.

Krajina shame

Sir,

Re: "In the Back" comments on Croatia (Eye 984). You conveniently leave out the following: The "Krajina" Serbs, with the Yugoslav army annexed one third of Croatia, forced half a million Croats and others out of their homes and murdered (it is now estimated) around 20,000 Croats.

UN forces in Croatia were supposed to return Croats to their homes and disarm the "Krajina" Serbs. The "Krajina" Serbs continued to "terrain cleanse" (as they put it) the areas they held of Croats as well as shelling Croatian cities — while the UN looked on. The Krajina Serbs were allowed to invade Bosnia to attack the safe haven of Bihac to create "Greater Serbia". The Croatian Army took action in August 1995, retaking its territory and saving Bihac.

As for "driving out" the Serbs from "Krajina" (in reality areas such as northern Dalmatia), they left ahead of the offensive under the orders of their leadership and for the good reason that many had been involved in war crimes.

Regards,
BRIAN GALLAGHER,

Via e-mail.

Cockpit 'n' bull story

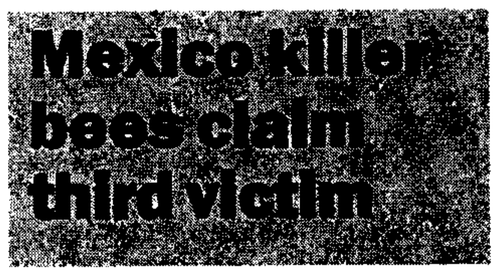
Sir,

The Chicago Tribune story reprinted in Funny Old World (Eye 984) about the Air Zimbabwe pilot who went for a leak and locked himself out of the cockpit is a famous apocryphal tale. I first heard it circa 1989, from a white South African (natch) illustrating the wild ways of darkest Africa. The Chicago Tribune has rescinded it and apologised.

Funny old world. Sies, as we say in these parts.

Yours,
BRYAN ROSTRON,

Cape Town.



Daily Telegraph

Way beyond the fringe...

Sir,

Do you have any way of forwarding this to the late Peter Cook?

Yours angrily,
JEREMY DORE,

Coggeshall, Essex.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

Stuart Storey: *And Michael Johnson wins by over a second, which in 400 metre running is a considerable distance.*

David Coleman: *Yes, well, it's a life-time, in fact.*

BBC
(Tom Cordiner)

"The thing that makes him [El Guerrouj] stand out is that he's got a great change of legs."

STUART STOREY, BBC
(Will Morlidge)

"Picking the team isn't difficult, it's who to leave out."

KEVIN KEEGAN, Radio 4
(Malcolm Quick)

"...but the trouble last night in Warsaw was nothing like the violence we saw back in the halcyon days of hooliganism."

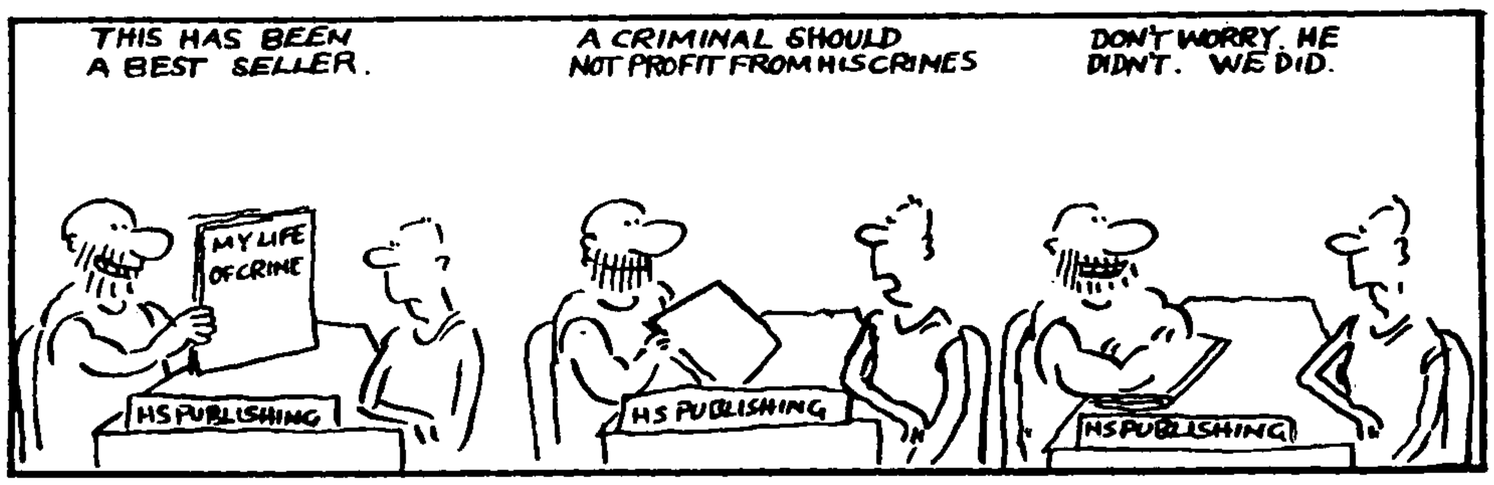
GMTV
(Gray Jolliffe)

"Portillo will have to protect himself now if he goes for a new seat... And he mustn't vacillate."

Radio 4
(Maureen Lipman)

HOM SAP

AUSTIN


THIS HAS BEEN A BEST SELLER.
A CRIMINAL SHOULD NOT PROFIT FROM HIS CRIMES
DON'T WORRY. HE DIDN'T. WE DID.
MY LIFE OF CRIME
HS PUBLISHING
HS PUBLISHING
HS PUBLISHING

Letter From **Malaysia**

from Our Own Correspondent

LORD chancellor Lord Irvine and some of Britain's most senior judges face severe political embarrassment in Kuala Lumpur this week as they attend the opening session of the 12th Commonwealth law conference.

They will be obliged to listen to the guest of honour, Malaysian prime minister Dr Mahathir, as he congratulates Malaysian judges for jailing journalists, barristers and his two main political opponents. Mahathir's aides said last week that he perceives the presence of English law lords as indicating their approval of Malaysia's controversial legal system.

Lord Irvine, Lord Woolf and other English judges will have to come to terms with the most recent human rights outrage, committed by the Malaysian court of appeal as recently as Saturday. It sent Murray Hiebert, a Canadian journalist employed by the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, to jail for reporting a case in which the teenage son of a powerful appeal judge sued his school for £1.5m in damages for dropping him from the debating team.

His report, said the judges, amounted to the crime of "scandalising the court", an offence which has long existed in English law but which has not been successfully prosecuted here since 1930 (when the editor of the *Morning Star* was jailed for describing a reactionary high court judge as "a puppet of the ruling class").

Hiebert's jailing is seen as the latest salvo in Mahathir's war against the foreign press. His story featured the saga of Govind Sri Ram, who was dropped from the debating team of Kuala Lumpur International School when his team-mates accused him of cheating and inventing quotations from the *Economist*.

His father, an appeal judge, intervened and the case ended up as a claim for massive damages from the school. It was settled after several days of testimony, which Hiebert reported in the *Review*. His crime, in the eyes of Malaysian judges, was to suggest that the hearing (only seven months after the writ was filed) was suspiciously speedy given the five years that such actions normally take in Malaysia.

Hiebert was ordered to serve three months in prison for this "scandalous" suggestion. His sentence in May 1997 was stayed during his appeal, but the appeal court confiscated his passport and refused for more than two years to hear his appeal, effectively imprisoning him in Malaysia after his wife and children had relocated to America. The appeal court on Saturday reduced his sentence to six weeks, and sent him to prison just as the English judges were arriving at Malaysia's most luxurious resort to begin their conference.

No doubt these distinguished jurists will take time during their taxpayer-funded junket to ponder Malaysia's recent uses of the law of contempt – most notably to jail one of the defence counsel acting for Anwar Ibrahim, Mahathir's hapless former deputy, for criticising the prosecution. They might also study the pleadings in a recent case which alleged that the country's chief justice Eusoff Chin had been involved in all manner of improprieties. These pleadings were struck out by one of his judicial colleagues on the ground that any criticism of Dr Mahathir's judges amounted to an "abuse of process".

The embarrassment to the British judges is accentuated because "scandalising the court" is still a crime in Britain (in Scotland, it goes by the name of "murmuring judges", which provided the title for David Hare's celebrated play). It gives the judges the power to jail their critics whenever their dignity is affronted, and in such cases they sit as judges in their own cause. The deployment of this arcane crime against foreign journalists and Anwar defenders is being justified on the grounds that British judges have not abolished it, or even regretted its existence.

If Lord Irvine does so, during his speech this week he will give Malaysia's beleaguered civil rights barristers some comfort. If he asks to visit Murray Hiebert and Anwar Ibrahim in their prison, a few miles out of Kuala Lumpur, he might give some reassurance that Britain actually does have an ethical foreign policy.

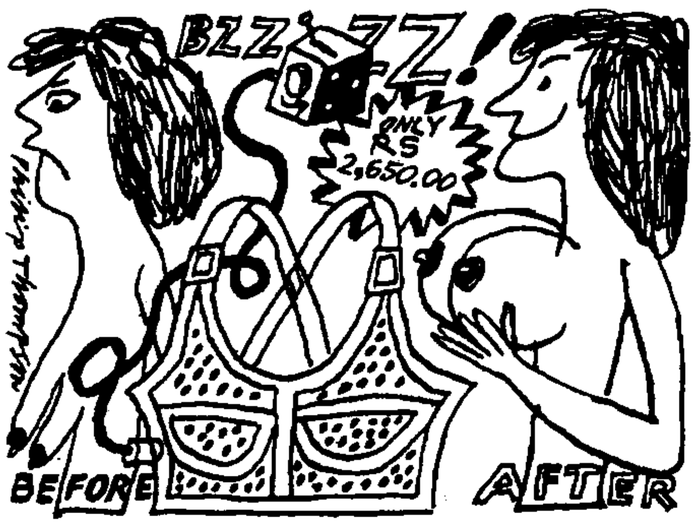
Meanwhile it should be recorded that throughout the Hiebert proceedings the counsel for young Govind consistently demanded that the journalist should be sent immediately to jail. Where is this vicious youth now? He has graduated from high school and is happily studying medicine in London. If Britain is serious about not providing a haven for human rights violators, Govind might be sent back to the tutelage of his real mentor – the good doctor Mahathir.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY **VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH**

● "DO YOU WANT TO HAVE PLUMP BREASTS? Girls who have not so well-developed breasts or have paper flat breasts, and the ladies whose breasts become too hang down for after giving birth try hard to achieve plumper no paperflat breasts by different means such as taking medicine, using body hormone, though having operations too though. But the effects of these ways are cruel. Oh no.

"Now, brand-new patent Tongli Electronic Curing Instrument Qiao Jian



Xiong will your dreams come true. Electric specific pulse frequencies make paperflats stimulated the luteotropic hormone of ootid. Boobies grow up, and plump breasts appear no side-effects nothing occurring. Qiao Jian Xiong is new type of brassiere, small motor attached. Simpletons use in situations such as house-keeping, and is completely undetectable, except for the low buzzing sound. Plump breasts achieved in one month. Send this coupon money off only Rs 2,650.00.

"For plump breasts please contact Hong Kong Tunk Lik Holdings, c/o Students Book Club, c/o Lew Chin Sin Chan, 23, Dr Joseph Rivière Street, Port Louis." *(Le Mauricien [Mauritius] 19/8/99. Spotter: Christine Pemberton)*

— ● —

● **"It is not prejudice," Furuseni Mugobera explained to a reporter from the Zimbabwe Standard, "but we're not the right class to maintain these white zvivarungu. I'm a poor man. How can I afford luxury items like videos, massage oils, electric blankets and wine? If they want these things, then why can't they stay in their own country?"**

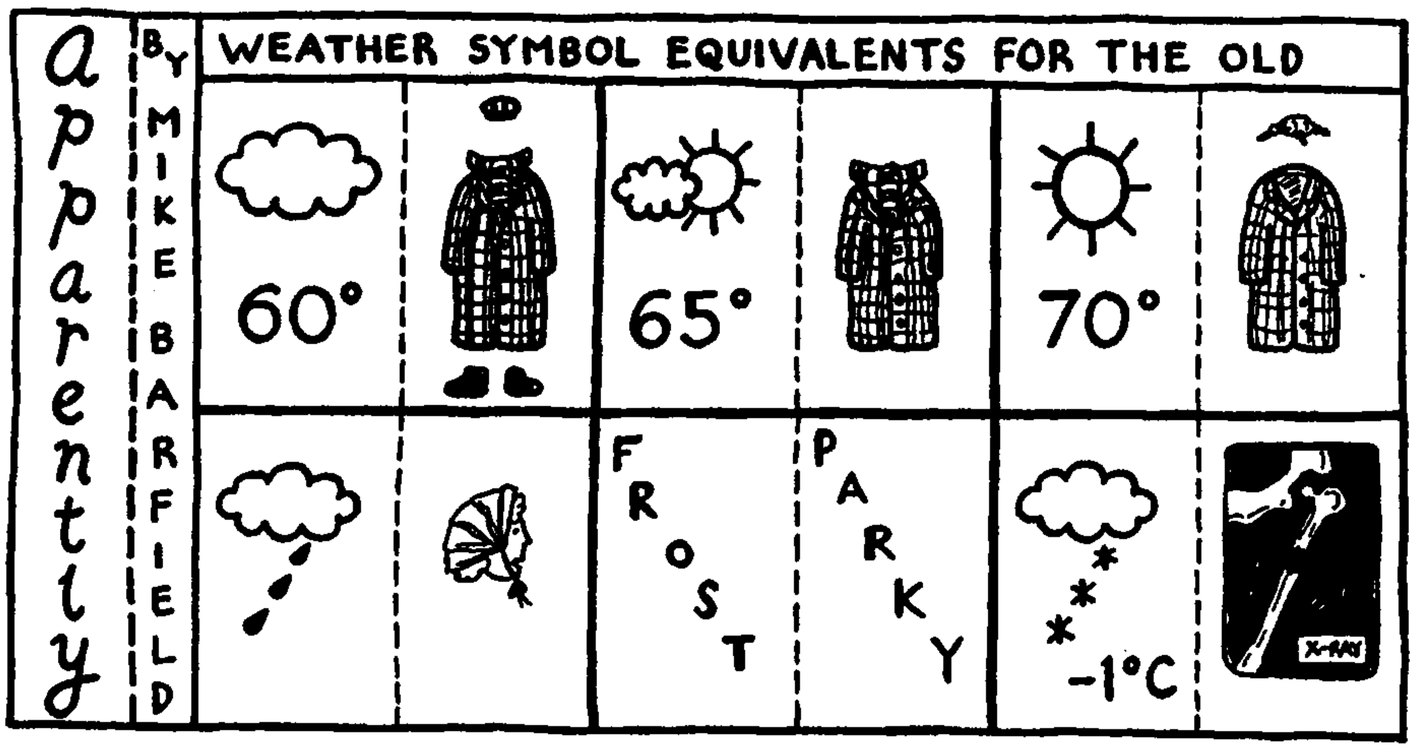
Mugobera was speaking on behalf of the Ndau community, an ancient tribe in the Chimanimani region of Zimbabwe, whose religion is based around the worship of spirits (or "zvivarungu"), summoned from the ether by tribal priests.

"During our religious rituals, our priests summon up the zvivarungu, and we try to entertain them. In the past, we did that in simple and dignified ways, like sticking out tongues, sniffing snuff, drinking seven days' beer, and dancing to traditional music. But over the past few years, more and more of the zvivarungu who appear have been white. They're usually the spirits of soldiers from Europe and America, who died here during past wars, and they aren't satisfied with snuff and seven days beer. No, they demand cigarettes, Michael Jackson records, hamburgers with wine, and specialist magazines, and they become abusive when we say we haven't got them. They say they're totally dead, and are therefore entitled to have whatever they want, and they sometimes turn violent when we refuse. But these are harsh economic times, and frankly they're stretching our hospitality too far." *(The Standard [Zimbabwe] 4-10/7/99. Spotter: Patricia Burnham)*

— ● —

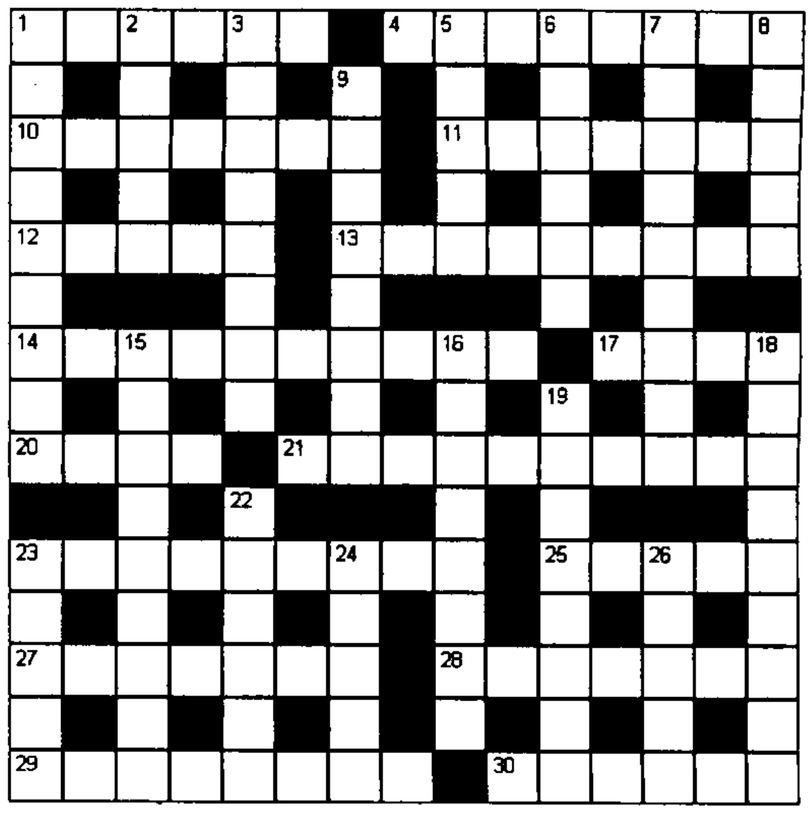
● *"My men are doing their best to unblock the pipes," Humberto Puerto told reporters in Tegucigalpa, "but this is a race against time. If we do not succeed, then mark my words. When winter comes, there will be huge explosions of faecal matter all over this city. It'll be the Hiroshima of shit around here, and I don't intend to see it happen."*

Puerto, manager of Honduras' National Aqueduct and Sewerage Network Service, explained the dangers posed to the capital by its crumbling sewerage system. "Last year, Hurricane Mitch destroyed half of the network, and cracked or blocked most of the rest. Sewage has been running through the streets for months, and the government says it has no money to rebuild the system. But all over the city, there are tanks that are already full of faecal matter, and they could easily explode because of the gases being produced, and the pressure of new fluids. Never mind about terrorist attacks. If the pipes aren't repaired by the time the rains come, then Tegucigalpa will turn into a giant shit bomb. And believe me, the fall-out will not be nice." (The Times [Honduras] 4/8/99. Spotter: Dr James Begg)



EYE CROSSWORD 140

by Cyclops *£100 prize*



ACROSS

1 Before the sort of Aussie cricketer feared by England, we hear — 1939 at least? (3-3)
4 Mad Ian Paisley's first road, perhaps (8)
10 Piss artist stuck in awful hole in Southern Africa (7)
11 Ex-dictator gets love to jerk nuts (7)
12 Whole team in bed flipping poisoned (5)
13 The nation's representative, Birt, has interest in female newsreader (9)
14/22 When party politicians ramble by the sea? (10,6)
17 Nothing gained by Maxwell knocker (4)
20 Essayist of little profit to farmers now (4)
21 After outing castrate Blair aide, perhaps (4,6)
23 Days off imbibing a soft drink, getting stomach disorder (9)
25 Soundly expresses disapproval of island people of Africa (5)
27 Head's alternative to a student union (4,3)
28 Sounds like pub hunt — might reveal why someone is late (7)
29 Expecting Gran to go on a spree with ten p (8)
30 Exercise, piss about and it could be a heart monitor (6)

DOWN

1/6 The Beast of Bolsover certainly is one! (9,6)
2 Half of shes bonking here in the South East? (5)
3 Sir Alec roughly grabbing model's things (8)
5 Defence plea of ex-boxer partial to either sex (5)
6 (see 1 dn.)
7 An action regretted by hospital manager plump with fashionable crippling disease? (6,3)
8 Ejaculation by rotter up the summer residence (5)
9 Wolf using *Globe* pub (6,2)
15 Without doubt, devious Tone's aim embraces king (2,7)
16 Some dope is after ill-conceived ANC ban (8)
18 Second time in bar for someone with briefs (9)
19 Personal stink — university's opening quite outrageous shop (8)
22 (see 14)
23 Fail to maintain erection, being dead arse-over-tip hard up (5)
24 Old Englishman gets not one kiss since doing a U-turn (5)
26 Fool showing way Brenda divides Tory party leaders (5)

£100 prize to first solution opened on 24.9.99. Entries to 'Crossword', Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 139

Winner: ALISON E. WATERS

ACROSS: 1 Easy on the eye 10 Talk big 11 Greater 12 Envy 13 Stargazers 15 Torture 16 Halberd 17 Flasher 20 Bondage 22 Haranguing 23 Mens 25 Misused 26 Creeper 27 Stand-up comic.

DOWN: 2 All over 3 Yobs 4 Nightie 5 Hogarth 6 Eyeballing 7 Extreme 8 Street of Shame 9 Cross-dressers 14 Euthanasia 18 Arrests 19 Rounded 20 Bent cop 21 Adelphi 24 Demo.

ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev. A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

Hullo!

I am sure many of you will have been as saddened as I was to have seen on the news the tragic story of the 12-year-old girl, little more than a toddler, who has had a baby.

What kind of a society are we living in, where these things can happen?

What kind of a world is this where a young schoolgirl, with all her life ahead of her, is suddenly burdened with all the cares and woes of motherhood?

Isn't it every parent's worst nightmare?

These are the questions that I am sure we've all been asking ourselves.

And the answer, I'm afraid, is one that some of you aren't going to like very much.

It's about the "M-word". No, not money. There's nothing wrong with that, as Mr Sainsbury would be the first to remind us, after he put £2 million in the collection plate last week!

No, I'm talking about Morality. Something we don't talk about much now, do we?

But that's what this is all about. What we need is a new moral crusade, to make sure that the kind of things we see on our television screens (or read about on the internet!) never happen again.

We've got to build the kind of society where our children can enjoy their childhood and concentrate on getting 100 percent in their GCSEs, without worrying about which one of their boyfriends is the father of their baby.

"Easier said than done, vicar," I can already hear my friend from Tesco's saying to me.

Well, this is my answer to our friend, and all those Doubting Thomases (and Thomasinas!) who think that vicars are all talk and no action!

That's why we had a series of top-level talks at the vicarage to discuss what can be done about it. And this is what we've come up with.

1. Proposed by Mr Straw, chairman of the St Albion's Neighbourhood Watch.

An immediate curfew on all children in the parish, to ensure that they are all at home in bed (but not with each other, obviously!) after a certain time at night. We are still debating what that time should be, with options ranging

from 4 o'clock in the afternoon, when school finishes, to 3 o'clock in the morning, when the St Albion's club XstasE closes down.

2. Proposed by Mr Blunkett, chairman of the governors of the St Albion's Primary School.

All children in the parish to be given lessons on the importance of marriage as a building block to a more cohesive society. The lectures will stress that although there are many equally valid lifestyle options, it would be foolish not to recognise the part marriage has to play in the society of the future.

Possible team-leaders for these lessons on "The Importance of Marriage" include Mr Robin Cook, Mr Chris Smith, Mr Nick Brown, Mr Mandelson and Mr Lairg (supported by his wife Mrs Dewar).

Anyone who has any other ideas about how to promote the great "Moral Crusade" should send them to Mr Campbell's live-in partner, who has kindly offered to help out on this one.

In the meantime, I have composed a new chorus – "We're All Going On A Moral Crusade" – to be sung to the tune of Sir Clifford Richard's great hymn Summer Holiday (We're all going on a).

We shall be trying it out at evensong this Sunday, so please learn the words before you come:

"We're all going on a moral
crusade,
No more sex for a week or two.
We're all going on a moral
crusade,
So let's flush our drugs down
the loo."

(Words: Rev. A.R.P. Blair)

I think it could catch on!

Yours ever,

(Happily married to Mrs Cherie Booth – you should try it, Gordon!)

Tony

Millennium Tent Update

I am very pleased to be able to say that the St Albion's Millennium Tent is well on course for its opening in September 2000. An exciting new feature will be the "Antarium", a plastic replica of an ants' nest from Mr Sainsbury's allotment containing well over 200 genuine ants. This will represent "The Virtues of Hard Work". The vicar is particularly keen on this exhibit, as he says "We can all learn a lot from the humble ants, as they go uncomplainingly about their duties, doing exactly what they are told by the leader ant (Antus antus blairus). That's the Latin for 'ant' for those of you, like Mr Prescott, who did not have the benefit of a proper education (no disrespect intended, John!)."

C. Falconer, Chairman of the St Albion's "Millennium Tent Experience"

MISSION NOT IMPOSSIBLE!

Our special thanks to local artist Geoff Thompson (7½) for sending in this charming study of the Vicar launching his Crusade.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Mr Cook would like to thank all of you who have taken part in parish alms-giving over the last year.

The alms have been greatly appreciated by the poor people of Indonesia.

In fact, Mr Cook says that they have got so many alms that we don't need to give them any more!

So, well done all!

As it says in the Good Book, "The Lion shall lie down with the Lamb, and the Hawk shall fly over and kill them both" *(Geneside, Chapter 4, vs. 11).*

MILLIONS OF SPIES REVEALED

Defector's Shocking List Of Traitors

by Our Espionage Staff **Jack Tinker** and **A.J.P. Taylor-Soldier-Spy**

IN THE most sensational revelation ever to be revealed, Soviet defector Boris Jonsonov, Chief Librarian of the KGB Secret Central Archive, has revealed the names of millions of top-ranking British spies who between them nearly brought about the total collapse of Western civilisation as we know it.

Top of the list is Mrs Ethel Prunehat, 87, possibly the most dangerous KGB agent this country has ever known.

As a junior employee in the ball-bearing manufacturing company of Wibblings and Wapps of Neasden, Mrs Prunehat had access to the most sensitive ball-bearing related information which at the time could have helped Soviet scientists develop the first atomic-powered rollerblade.

Also named in Jonsonov's earth-shattering dossier are Sir Anthony Blunt, Burgess, McLean and Philby (the so-called "Secret Seven"), Dr No and Rosa Klebb who *(cont'd. p. 94)*

ON OTHER PAGES

☐ How the KGB planned to put a whoopee cushion on Prince Charles's Investiture Throne and thus destabilise the Monarchy by CHAPMAN PINCHYERMATERIAL **2**

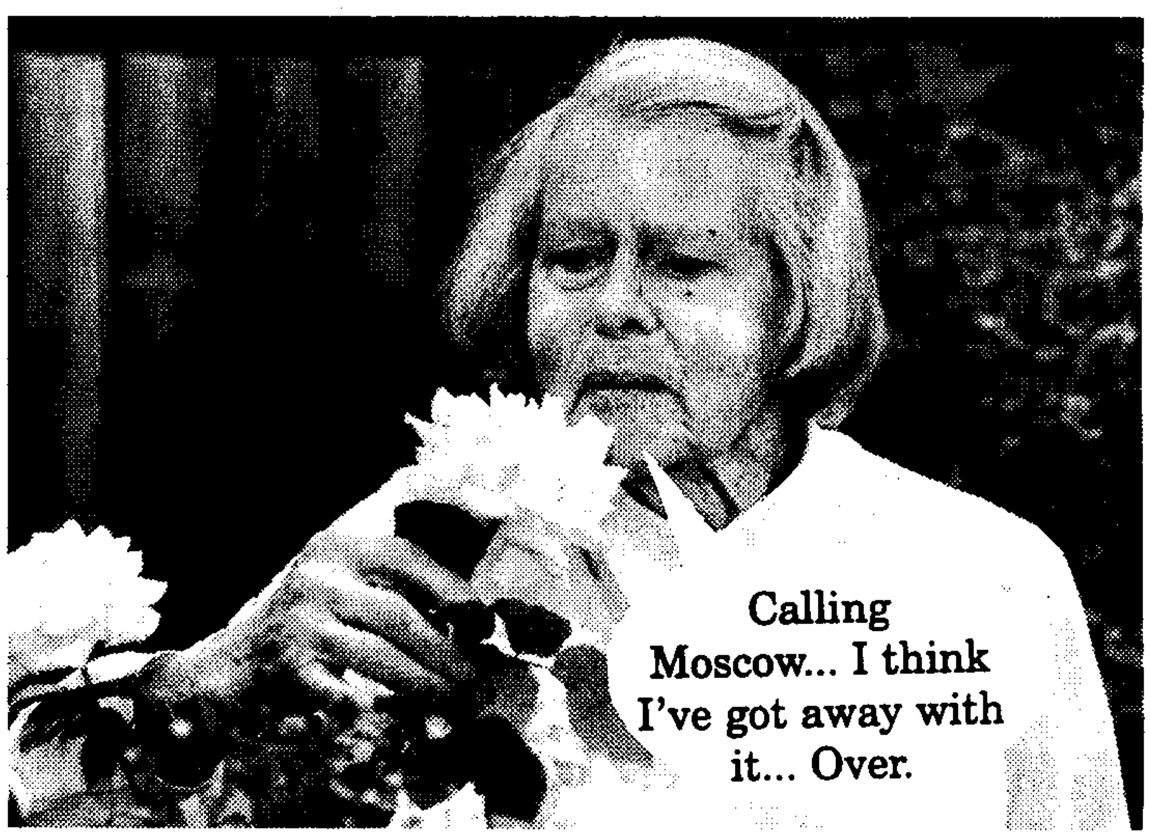
☐ Why Mrs Prunehat, the greatest traitor since Guy Fawkes, should swing by historian *(Shurely shome mishtake? Ed.)* ANDREW ROBERTS **3**

☐ More stuff you knew already by EVERYONE ELSE **4-94**

TEN TELL-TALE SIGNS THAT MI5 MISSED IN THE NEASDEN MATA HARI

1. **She was chairman of the Neasden Women's Institute for the Overthrow of Capitalism.**
2. **She organised regular trips for the Darby and Joan Club to have tea and scones with senior KGB figures.**
3. **She listed her hobbies in "Who's Who" as spying for the KGB.**
4. **She had a life-size statue of Stalin in her front garden.**
5. **Her cottage in Wirral Lane, Neasden, was known to locals as "The Lubyanka".**
6. **When watching James Bond films in the Neasden Roxy she always booed when 007 appeared.**
7. **Er...**
8. **That's enough tell-tale signs.**

SPY WHO CAME IN FROM THE OLD



Calling Moscow... I think I've got away with it... Over.

St Cakes

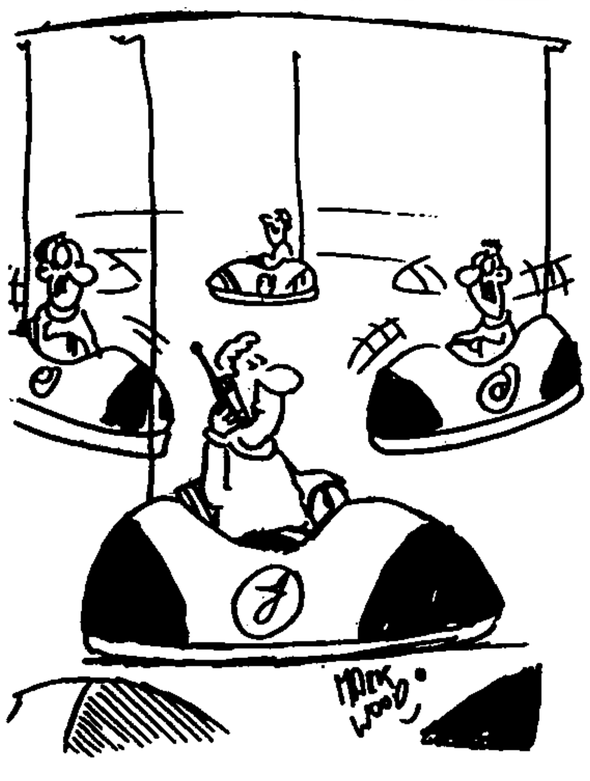
Peterhouse term begins today. There are 210 gays in the school and 2 straights. R.J.L. Pinke-Trouser (Portillo's) is Head Sailor. P.J.B. Youthful-Fumbling (Driberg's) is Keeper of the Cottage. Rev. P.D. O'Phile has left to take over the chaplaincy of St Kincora's Home in North Wales. His place is taken by The Very Rev. D.C. Pocket-Billiard (formerly Chaplain to the Admiralty). There will be a performance of "The Buggers Opera" by John Gay on Nov. 3rd in the Lower Passage. Sir Ian Mackellan (O.C.) will open the new toilet block on Founders Day. Outings are on Dec. 12th.

Top Ten Bores

(As supplied by Borewatch & Bori Polls)

1. **Alice Thomson**
2. **Her Great-Grandmother Alice**
3. **Her Husband Ed**

(That's enough Bores. Ed.)



THE ALTERNATIVE VOICE

Dave Spart at the Last Night of the Proms

ONCE again we have been treated to a nauseating display of imperialist, chauvinist, nationalist, neo-fascist flag-waving and chanting, ie the so-called Last Night of the Proms, which it isn't because there will be another equally nauseating display next year by an all-white, all-male, all middle-class elite er... where in the multi-cultural society which is Britain today are the classical Afro-Asian composers such as er and er... er... only the outdated anthems of discredited imperialist dictatorship were heard typified by the archetypal fascist William Blake... *(Cont.'d p. 94)*

David Spart is co-chair of the Guardian Letter Writers Cooperative Society

Old Cambridge Nursery Rhymes

Polly take your trousers off
Polly take your trousers off
Polly take your trousers off
We'll all have sex. ♫ *(Trad.)*

Eye Readers Choose Their 100 Favourite TV Moments

1 1992. Shaznee leaves Dwayne for Terry in *Neighbours*.

2 1996. Sid Moron tells Alan Titchmarsh to "F*** off" on controversial breakfast TV show.

3 1998. The famous "Armadillo gets diarrhoea" episode in popular BBC series *The Paravets*.

4 1993. Des. Lynam's moustache catches fire in *Match Of The Day* studio.

5 1991. England vs. The Vatican. Gary Knobbs scores treble hat-trick in extra time as England fail to beat Pontiffs XI.

6 1996. The famous blocked toilet scene from *Birds Of A Feather*" (series 8).

7 1953. James Chuter-Ede crashes out in Newport Pagnell by-election, signalling end of twenty years of *(Shurely shome mishtake? Ed.)*

GREAT STATESMAN DIES

A Nation Mourns

by **Our Entire Staff**

ONE OF the towering figures of post-war British politics has died.

Tributes flowed in from all over the country at the news that the greatest Conservative thinker of his generation had died at his castle on the cliffs of his beloved Kent.

But "Alan", as he was known to his millions of admirers throughout the civilised world, was not just a mere politician.

His diaries were possibly the greatest contribution to confessional literature since Pepys.

And he was not just a politician and a diarist. He was arguably the greatest war historian of all time.

His masterpiece "Why We Should Have Joined Up With Hitler Instead Of That Creep Stalin" changed conventional thinking about World War Two forever.

And he was not just a politician, a diarist and an historian.

He was also one of the greatest drivers of fast cars of all time.

And he was not just a driver of fast *(continued for 94 more pages)*

ON OTHER PAGES

- Was My Friend Alan The Greatest Prime Minister We Never Had? *asks Paul Johnson*
- Why I Blubbed When I Heard The News *by Boo-hoo-hoos Anderson*
- Why We Will Never See His Like Again *by Everyone Else*

The Wit And Wisdom Of The Great Statesman

On Leadership

"Hitler? Good man."

"Mrs Thatcher? Phwoar, I'd give her one."

On Africa

"Niggy-noggyland, I call it."

"Mmmm, black girls have got marvellous arses."

On History

"Churchill was a leftie who lost us the war."

"Hitler, good egg."

On Europe

"German women, bloody good in the sack."

"Swedish birds, phwoar. Wouldn't you?"

"Hitler, first-rate chap."

On His Parliamentary Colleagues

"Kenneth Clarke. A fat, idle slug."

"Michael Heseltine, a common little spiv who had to buy his own hairbrushes."

"Tom King. A fat, idle slug."

*"Clare Short. As Trots go, she is pretty f***able."*

On Civil Servants

"Devious, scheming bastards."

On His Rottweilers "Goering" and "Himmler"

"Unlike human beings, they never let me down."

On His Wife Jane

"Not very often."

On Hitler

That's enough wit and wisdom. Ed.

The Alan I Knew

by TV's Charles Moore

I WELL remember taking Alan out to lunch at the Savoy Grill when he'd just been made Minister for Paperclips. I had ordered a tolerably good bottle of claret, but Alan would have none of it.

"Don't offer me that gnat's piss," he said. "I'm sure Conrad (Lord Black, proprietor of the *Daily Telegraph*) can run to some Chateau Lafite '61." This cost £850, but Alan laughed when I remonstrated with him. "Don't be such a spastic little poofter," he mocked, while giving the coloured waitress a playful grope.

Say what you like about Alan. He may have been a shit, a fascist and a sex-crazed lunatic, but he was very rich and went to Eton.

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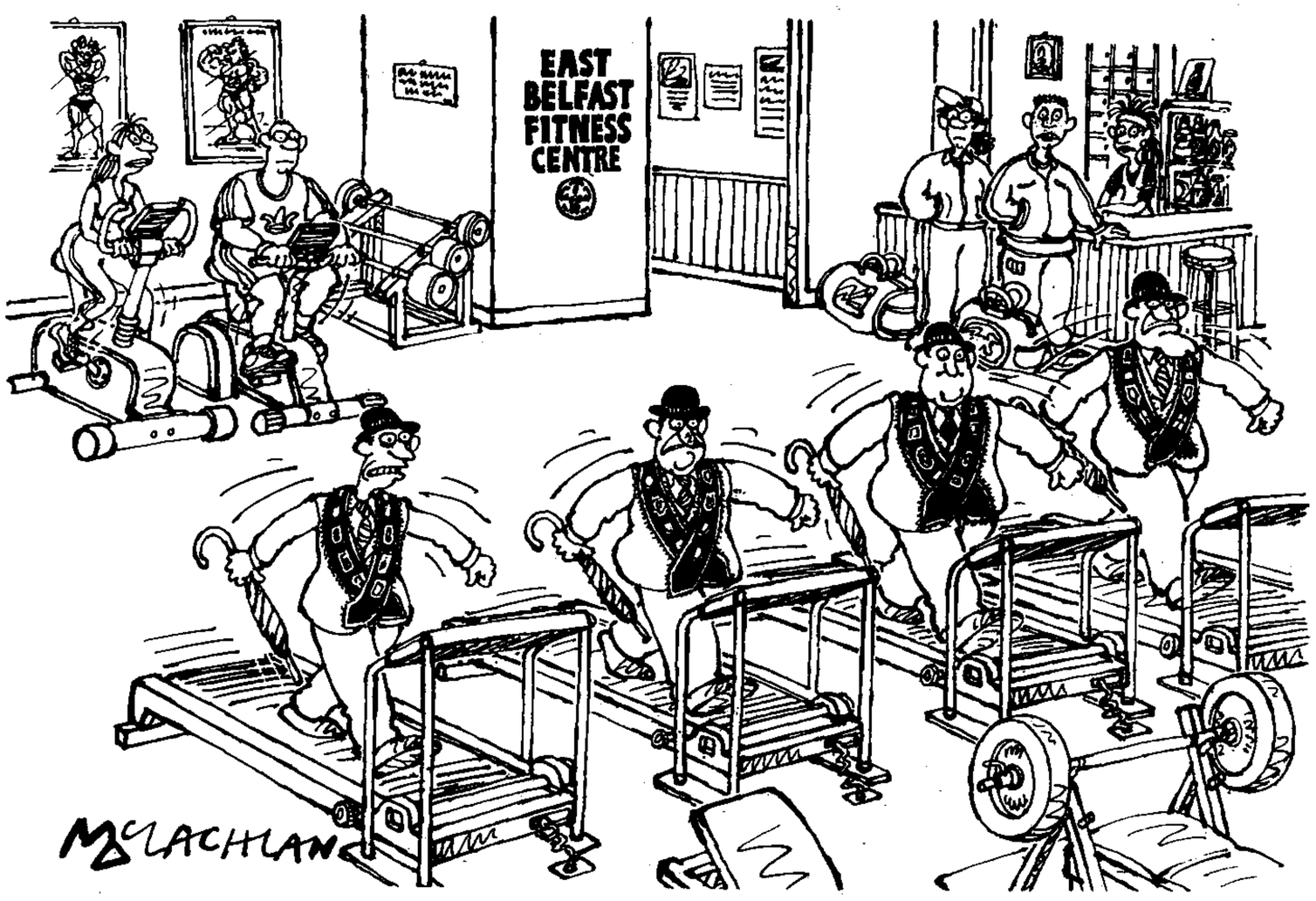
HEATH'S PRIVATE VIEW

The GRAND TOUR
ANY PLACE OF HISTORIC INTEREST ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD
MONSTER TOURS
LET'S GO TO WORK!
WORLD WIDE TOURS
TOILETS
Coke IS IT →
SO THIS IS WHAT PEOPLE LIVED LIKE IN THE OLD DAYS
CUTE!
YOU MEAN BEFORE THEY BECAME SOPHISTICATED
DISNEY-LAND WOULD HAVE BEEN NOT SO OLD FASHIONED
I'D RATHER SEE SOUTH PARK AGAIN
IT'S ALL BREAKING UP
WHY DO THEY WEAR SUCH SILLY CLOTHES?
PARKING HELL
WHAT'S A MOSAIC?
IT WAS THEIR TELEVISION
EARLY ROMAN ROLEX?
GAP
T SHIRT OF THE LAST SUPPER
THE TOWN ISN'T EVEN AIR CONDITIONED!
OK, WE CAN NOW CROSS GREECE OFF OUR 'MUST SEE' LIST
HEATH



"I see the marching season's over for the year"

APOLOGY British Supermarkets

IN RECENT weeks, in common with all other tabloid newspapers, we may have given the impression that all supermarkets were in some way greedy, evil, money-grubbing institutions interested only in squeezing maximum profit out of the long-suffering and over-charged British shopper. Headlines such as "What a super mark-up!", "Asda be seen to be believed!" and "Prices Tes-co up again!" may have led our readers to the conclusion that the supermarkets had an unfair stranglehold on the British retail market.

We now accept that nothing could have been further from the truth as instead we urge our readers to take advantage of our "Trolley Good!" bonanza supermarket shopping give-away promotion.

We apologise for any confusion we may have caused our readers and any loss of money *that we may* have caused our wonderful new sponsors, Asda, Tesco, Safeway, Sainsbury, etc, etc.

© Daily Gnome

Radio Highlights

Radio 4

The Today Programme

John Humphrys: I have with me in the studio the author of a controversial new book about declining standards in our society. John, this is just a load of old reactionary nonsense, isn't it?

John Humphrys *(for it is he)*: What I was trying to do in my book was point out...

John Humphrys: Come off it, John, this is just a rabid rant from an old-timer on the way out, isn't it?

John Humphrys: It seems to me that in Britain today...

John Humphrys: Well, is it rubbish or isn't it?

John Humphrys: I don't think that I can...

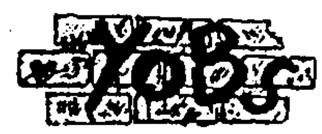
John Humphrys: Yes or no?

John Humphrys: It is not fair to...

John Humphrys: Yes or no, John?

John Humphrys: You've asked that question five times now, John...

John Humphrys: Then give me an answer, you old... *(Cont'd. 94 MHz)*



HUSBAND

mmm.. You're going with 'C'. You're not going to change your mind?
No Chris
WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE
You could take the £4,000.. It's a lot of money.. Are you sure you're happy with 'C'
WHO WANTS
Look Chris Stop takin' the piss. Tell me or I'll knock your teeth down your throat!!

JOURNALISTS FLEE AS INTRUDER WRECKS BBC NEWSROOM

by Our Media Staff **Lunchtime O'Nooze**

TERROR struck White City yesterday when a deranged intruder penetrated BBC security and set about destroying the corporation's news operation.

A man in his early fifties, wearing glasses and an Armani suit managed to convince the Commissionaires that he was the Director General of the BBC.

He then set about the wholesale destruction of the newsroom and hardened reporters fled in terror as he wreaked havoc on the once proud institution.

Said one terrified witness, "It was mayhem. He threw everything around. The six o'clock news went to nine o'clock which went after Match of the Day. He attacked presenters and threatened them with wearing colourful ties on Breakfast Television."

Seasoned veterans looked on impotently as he shouted complete nonsense about focus groups, digital broadcasting and management facilitation service reorganisation.

Putting the Birt in

"You should see the state of the place," said a tearful Anna Ford. "It's been redesigned with a new theme tune and a new logo. It's a disaster. Somebody should have stopped him before he even got in the building."

That new News theme tune in full

Dumb Dumb
Dumb Dumb Dumb
Dumb
Dumb Dumb
Etc

That Grammar School Ballot Paper In Full

DO you wish to see your kids given a decent education rather than be callously thrown on to the educational scrap heap by swotty, toffee-nosed creeps in blazers and ties?

☐ **YES** ☐ **NO**

NOTE

All parents of school age children are eligible to vote in the ballot unless they want to tick "No" box.

Issued by the Department of Education, Education and Education.

PORTILLO'S SECRET SHAME: "YES, I WAS A TORY"

by Our Political Staff **Gay Search**

MICHAEL PORTILLO, the well-known homosexual TV personality, has admitted that as a young man he was "a friend of Maggie".

He told the Times newspaper, "Like a lot of young men, I swung to the right and belonged to a group of pretty outrageous Tories.

"However, I have now come out of the cabinet and I have put all that youthful indiscretion behind me.

"I am now a compassionate, caring, liberal, middle-of-the-road politician."

MICHAEL! MICHAEL! MICHAEL! OUT! OUT! OUT!

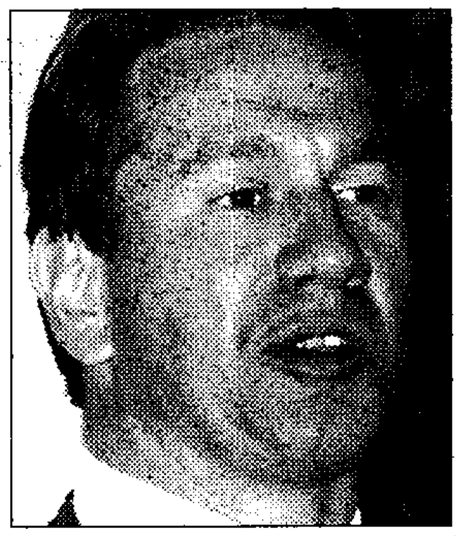
When challenged about the level of his involvement with the seedy practices of "Tories" in the 1980s, Portillo admitted:

"Look, I don't want to go into detail, but there was a certain amount of licking bottoms, screwing large numbers of working men, and generally buggering up the country."

Mr Portillo made an impassioned plea for people not to hold his shameful past against him.

"Please concentrate on my private affairs," he said, "and don't judge me on my public life."

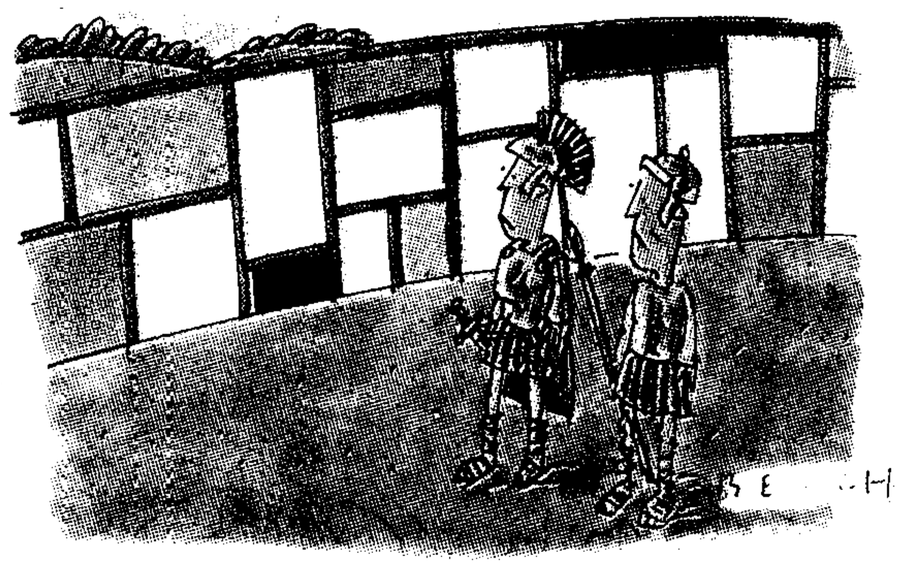
William Hague is finished.



It would be quite improper for me to say anything at this stage...

...Alan was a very dear friend and we're all still coming to terms with his sad loss...

...I therefore have no announcement whatever about my plans in respect of Kensington and Chelsea, except to say... VOTE FOR ME!



Mondrian's Wall

AN ALTERNATIVE VOICE

CEDRIC SPART

THE nauseating hypocrisy of Michael Portillo is totally nauseating, ie his admission that he was gay in the past, but is now a straight, which is highly offensive to all members of the gay and lesbian community because, as we all know, anyone who has been gay must always be gay, even if they pretend for reasons of social hypocrisy to revert to a heterosexual lifestyle, er, not only that but Portillo has gone on record as voting against gays in the military and against lowering the age of consent, which proves conclusively that he is gay, er, surely Peter Tatchell is right when he says **(cont'd. p. 94)**

CAUGHT AND CIRCULATED

KENSINGTON PALACE

Saturday. Lord Frederick Windsor, the 94th in line to the line of cocaine, will today attend a party at which he will go to the toilets and be attended by Rupert Snortington-Spoone (O.E.). Lord Frederick will be offered a small quantity of high quality Colombian cocained mixed with talcum powder, bleach and granulated sugar, which he will graciously purchase from Mr Spoone for the sum of £500.

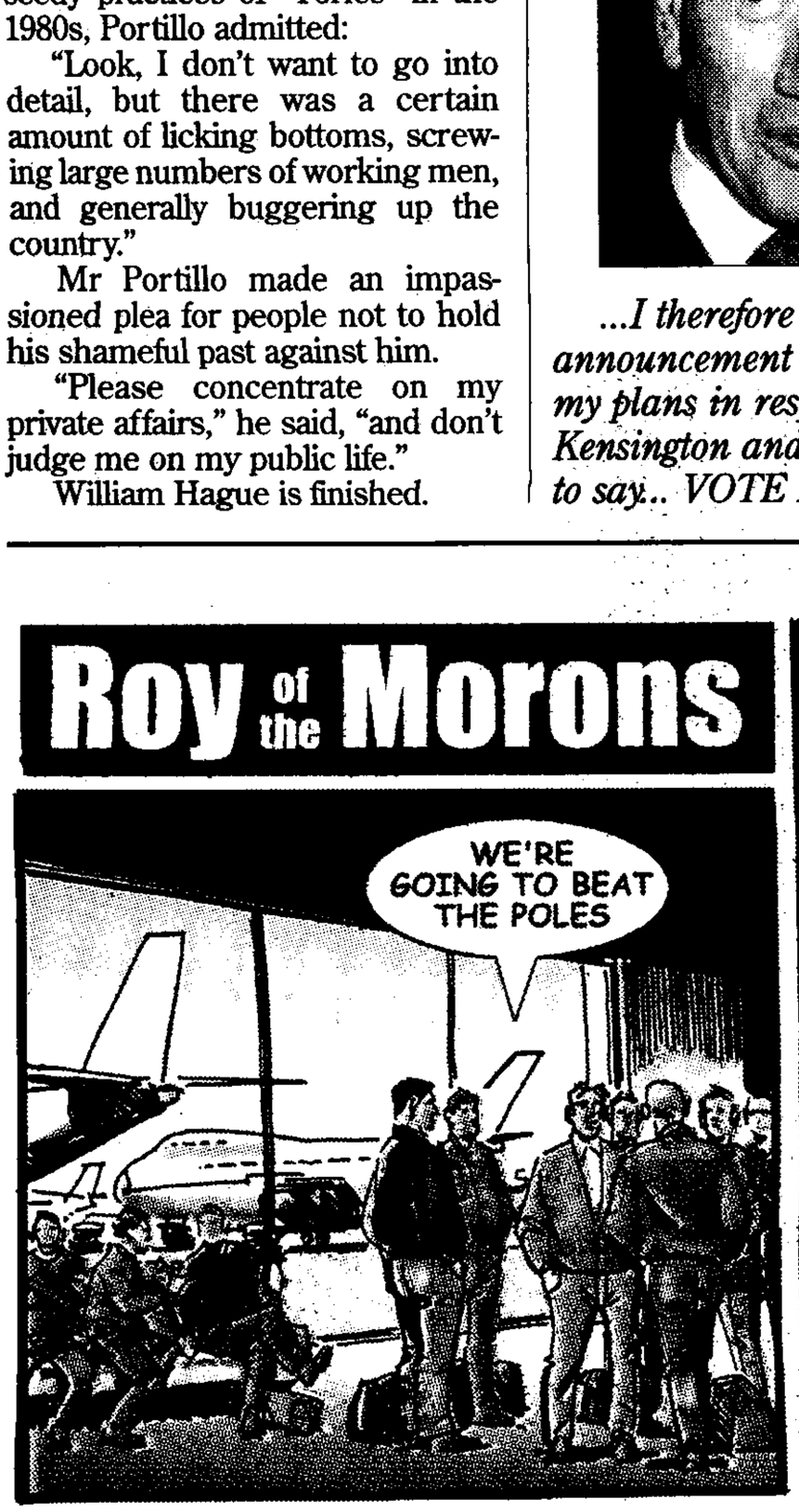
He will then return to the party talking excitedly in a loud voice about "Charlie".

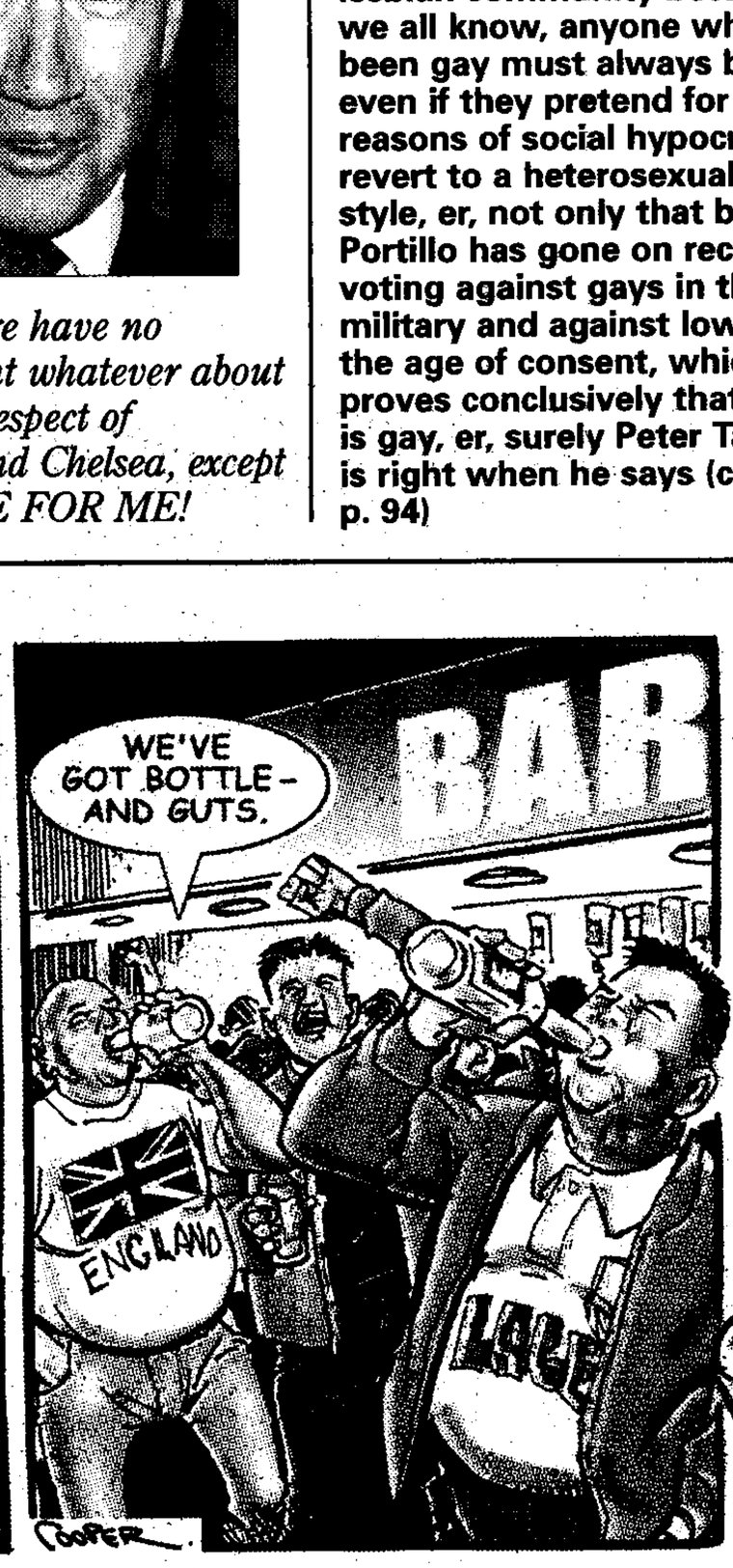
Mr Spoone will proceed to a phone box from where he will contact a Mr Les Filth from the *News of the World* and inform him about Lord Frederick's recent transaction.

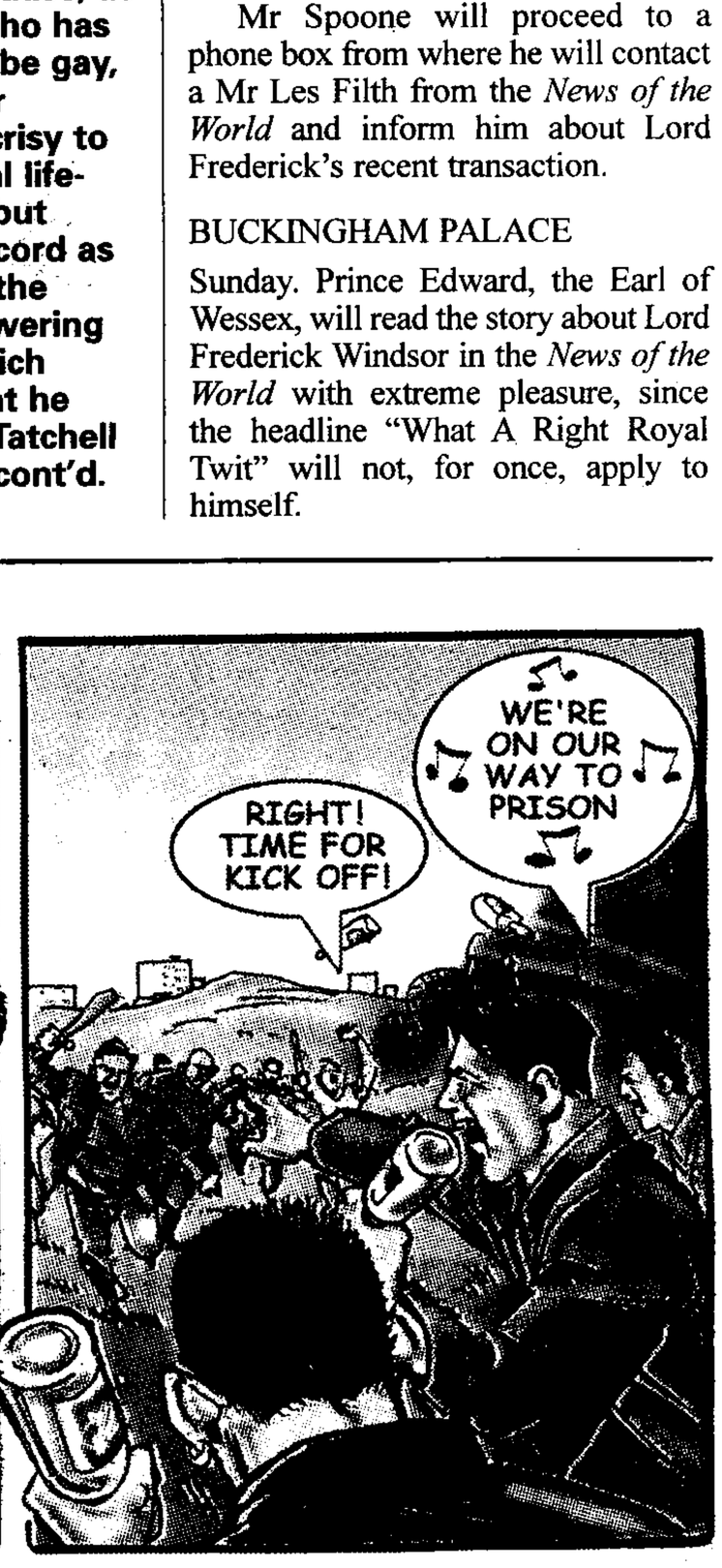
BUCKINGHAM PALACE

Sunday. Prince Edward, the Earl of Wessex, will read the story about Lord Frederick Windsor in the *News of the World* with extreme pleasure, since the headline "What A Right Royal Twit" will not, for once, apply to himself.

Roy of the Morons







How I Slept With Saint Ted

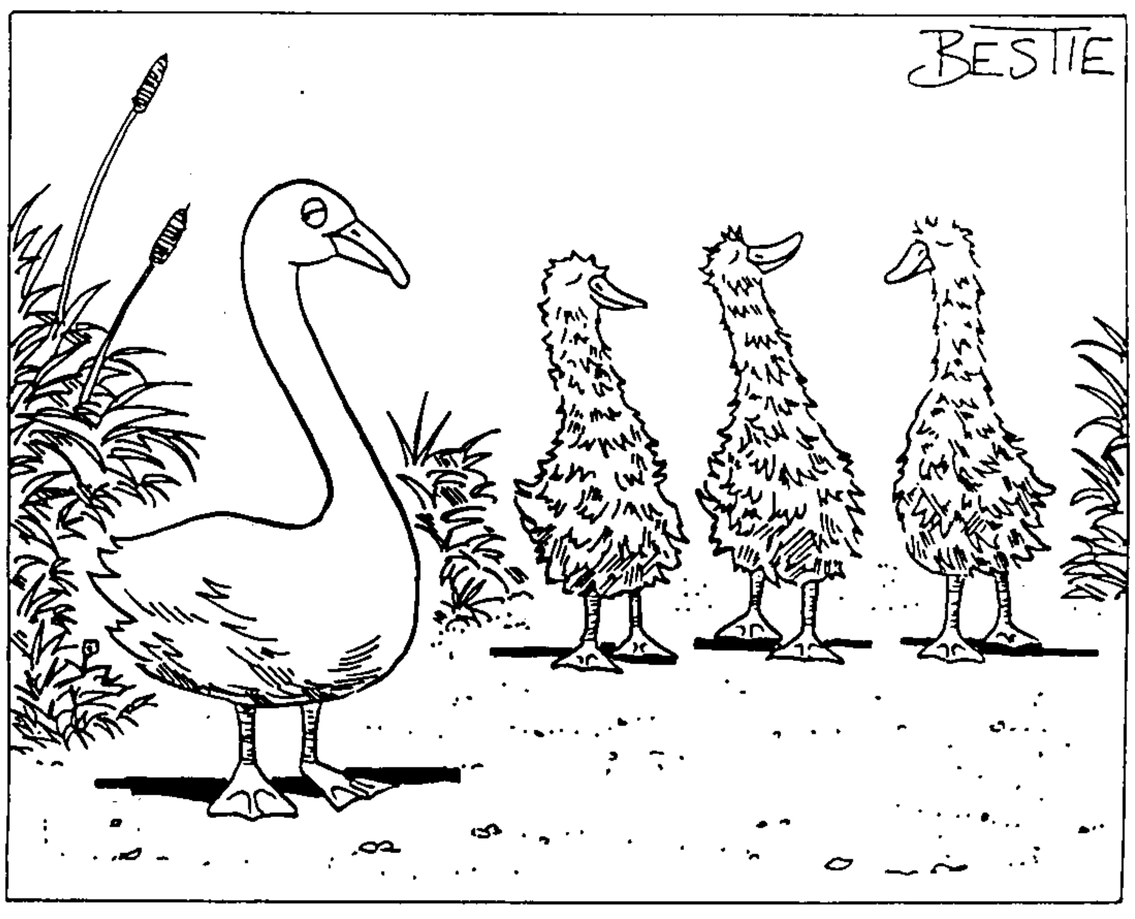
by **Emma Tennant**, author of a lot of books nobody has read

I FIRST set eyes on the great poet Ted Hughes at a party in Chelsea in 1975. Contrary to universal opinion, he was no saintly hermit. I already knew that he was sleeping with hundreds of women, and I decided that I would like to join them.

Our steamy love romps in Devon barns and untidy flats in Kentish Town are something which, as a famous novelist and half-sister of Princess Margaret's friend Lord Glenconner, I will never forget.

Some people may be shocked that I should come forward with these lurid revelations about this great genius so soon after his death.

But, believe me, I have agonised for months over whether to tell the world of our passionate affair. And I have finally decided that it would be totally dishonest of me not to make a lot of money by cashing in on him while the going's good.



Just when the Ugly Duckling turned into a swan, scruffy, brown feathers became fashionable

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

The Greatest Love Affair of the Twentieth Century

Michael Wholemeal and Margaret Drab

by Our Interview-to-Plug-the-Serialisation-of-the-Book-we've-Bought Staff, Philippa Page

WHEN I rang up Margaret Drab to ask if I could interview her and her husband about his wonderful new biography which we are serialising on pages 16 to 24, she told me "I hope you don't expect me to talk to you when you come down to Somerset. I'm hard at work on my literary novel *Mrs Fothergill Comes To Tea*, and I'm far too busy to talk to some dreary little journalist."

It was typical of her legendary charm and hospitality. No wonder her husband Michael Wholemeal has lived in a separate house throughout their marriage.

"So you're that ghastly little journalist," she greeted me, when I arrived at the end of my very long journey to their remote Exmoor farmhouse. "You'd better talk to Michael. He's in London. I haven't got his number."

Theirs truly is a romance which must rate with Eloise and Abelard, Dante and Beatrice, Posh and Becks *(cont'd p. 94)*

STARTING TOMORROW

VOLUME One of the most eagerly awaited autobiography of the 20th Century: ***Michael Wholemeal's 'The Wholemeal Memoirs'***.

In the opening instalment, The Twyford Years, author Wholemeal lists his various third-cousins and great-aunts in exhaustive detail, and tries to get you interested in them. The 94-page extract takes us up to the author's 8th birthday, when the narrative reaches a dramatic climax as the author describes the trauma of inadvertently leaving his tennis racquet at a friend's house.

FRIDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 1999 **The Dalai Telegraph** 1 YAK

Revered Elderly Leader Attacked

Tibet, Tuesday

ONE OF the most respected and influential figures in the world was sensationally accused today of being "a shambling old dictator in Gucci shoes".

The blistering broadside against the Dirtai Digga, spiritual leader of millions of moronic readers, amazed his followers.

Mass Murdoch

The Dirtai was accused of "standing in the way of progress" and keeping his subjects in "mediaeval ignorance".

This astonishing attack came from wealthy Tibetan tycoon Mr D. Lama, who went on to say that "The Dirtai's disciples believe that he may be God or at the very least the sun proprietor. But actually, according to cynics, the sun comes out of his bottom."

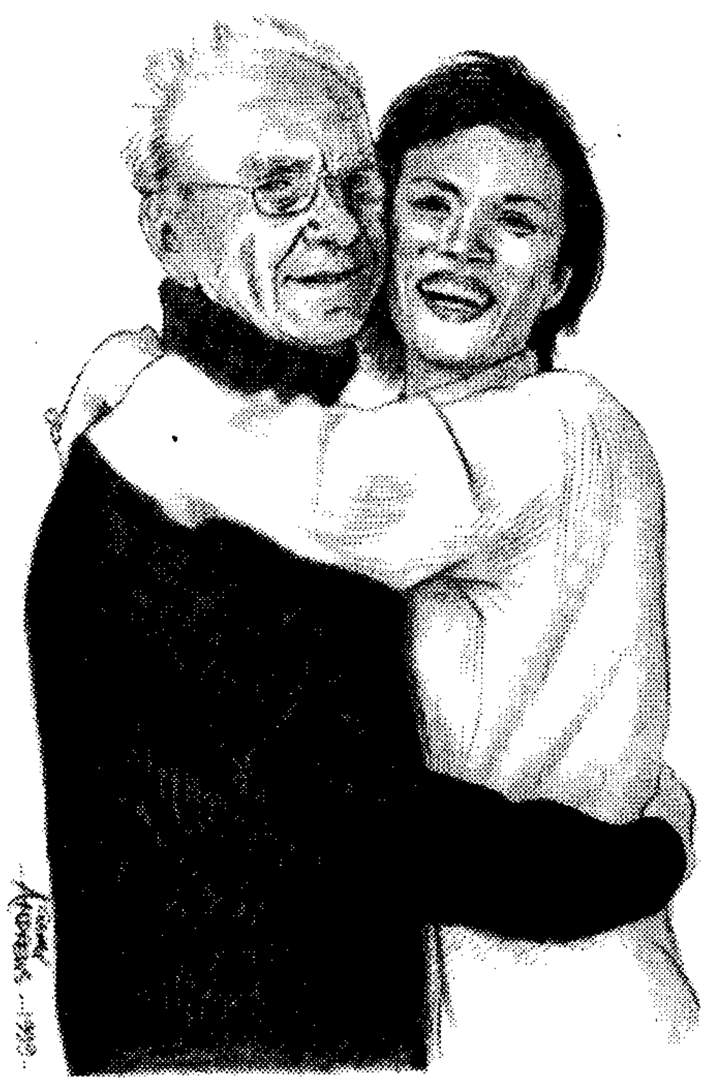
Buddha Can You Spare A Dime

Mr Lama concluded his interview with the magazine *Monks and Monkmen* by saying: "The Dirtai claims that he is not political and that his only religion is the pursuit of money. However, I have heard it said that he is a power-crazed monster intent on spreading his evil creed throughout the entire globe and he will stop at nothing to suck up to the Chinese."

From the best-selling author of Born To Be Queen, Heir of Sorrows *and* La Dame Aux Camillas, *now comes the greatest love story of them all.*

Never Too Old...

by Dame Sylvie Krin



THE STORY SO FAR: Billionaire media-mogul Rupert Murdoch has at last discovered true love in the twilight years of his life. Now read on...

"Grunt. Grunt. Grunt."
"Keep going, darling."
"This is going to kill me!"
"Is it, darling? Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

THE SWEATING septuagenarian pulled one more time at the oars of the Kami Kazi indoor rowing machine, and then slumped forward.

His svelte young Oriental bride rushed forward eagerly, with a glass of Chinese herbal viagra made by Buddhist monks in the mountains of Hah-don province.

She helped the exhausted press baron to his feet and guided him to his favourite rocking chair, looking down from the 58th floor onto the sparkling wavelets of the Rock Hudson River.

"Blimey, Wendy, I'm pooped. I'm sweating worse than an abo's armpit. But I reckon I've lost at least eight pounds in the past two hours."

His young wife's inscrutable porcelain features registered a moment of alarm.

"Not too many pounds, I hope, honeybun!" she exclaimed. "That's not my idea at all."

Rupert took a swig of his oriental love potion, before replying: "This stuff's certainly given me a bit of an idea, Wend. And this isn't a kangaroo's tail you're looking at!"

As if to echo the mogul's inmost thoughts, the tugs on the river below all hooted in raunchy unison.

"No time for that now, you dirty old digger," mocked the bewitching siren from the land of bird's nest soup. "You've got to get dressed for our photo-shoot with *Vanity Fair*."

"*VANITY FAIR*," announced the disembodied voice from the intercom 300 floors below. "We've come for the interview."

"Come on up, we're ready," breathed the shapely temptress from the land of shark's fin noodles.

An hour later, Stothard the butler announced: "Mr William Shawcross, the official biographer, is here, milady, accompanied by a number of gentlemen with photographic devices."

The young Mrs Murdoch immediately took charge.

"Let's forget about the words. You can make them up later, Mr Shawcross."

"Very good, madam," replied the obsequious litterateur, "I'll send them along later for your approval, as usual."

"Just make sure you get the clothes right," she added, in an imperious tone. "Ru-pert!"

From the master bedroom emerged the scarcely recognisable figure of the world's most powerful media tycoon.

Despite his 87 years, he was clad from head to foot in the latest designer clothes from the world's leading couturiers.

"Walk up and down, dear, and try not to fall over," she ordered.

The owner of 20th Century Fox and the Times Newspaper Group of London, England, shuffled forward, as if on a catwalk, while his partner intoned "Rupert is wearing a soot-black three-ply cashmere turtle-neck from the House of Ziggy Mitsubushi. Note how discreetly it complements the stone-washed brushed denim loose-fit combat trousers from Tommy Fingerfood of Boston. And don't forget the shoes."

She broke off, as she noticed in horror that her beloved billionaire husband had forgotten to put on the Yelland and Mackenzie all-weather deck shoes she had carefully chosen, and had instead donned a pair of well-worn Marks & Spencer's tartan bedroom slippers.

"Stop!" she barked. "The whole thing's a disaster. You can only photograph him from the knees up..."

"KNEES UP! Arms up! Come on, Rupert, you've got another 200 press-ups before you're allowed your frozen soya drink!"

"Jeez," wheezed the panting press lord, as he struggled to get through the new Chinese Air Force "Get Fit Or Die" exercise regime. "This will finish me off."

The sultry sex goddess from Szechuan allowed an enigmatic smile to play around her rose-petal mouth...

To be continued

EVERYBODY OUT

A new poem by the People's Poet Laureate **Professor T.U.C. Motion**

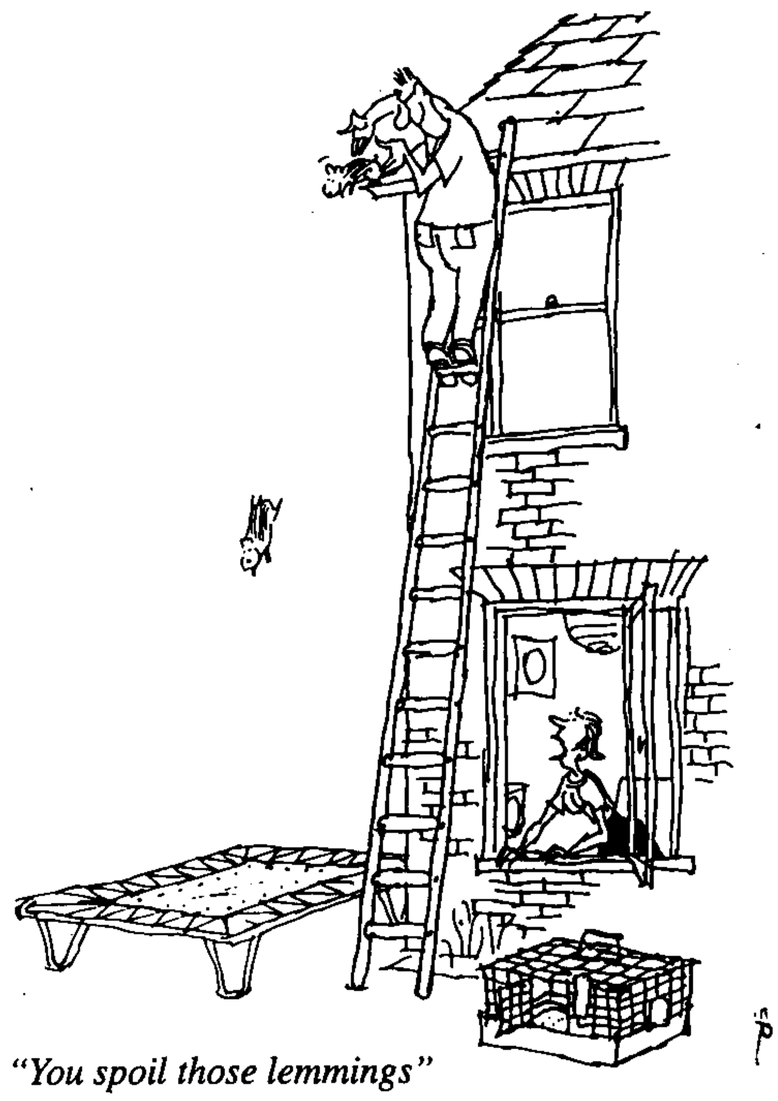
I went out for a
Walk along the river
Bank.
It was a sunny day with scattered
Showers.
The river was flowing like
A river, but I was going
The opposite way, against the
Tide. In the distance were
The towering towers of Big
Ben and Parliament. Bong
Went the bell. It was like
A bell ringing on
A sunny day by
The river. The sun was like
Buttered toast, ie yellow.

© Sir Andrew Lloyd-Motion, Poet Laureate to His Royal Highness Tony Blair.

LATE NEWS

The following amendments have been proposed to Comrade Motion's poem by **The National Union of Wordsmiths And Poetry Makers:**

i) Line 3, delete "Bank", which refers to a capitalist enterprise. Insert "workers' co-operative".
ii) Line 4, delete "scattered", which suggests disunity. Insert "united".
iii) Line 10, delete "Ben". Insert "Tony Benn".
iv) Last line, delete "yellow". Insert "red" as in People's Flag.
v) Delete whole poem, replace with Composite 473 on National Minimum Wage.



"You spoil those lemmings"

DIARY

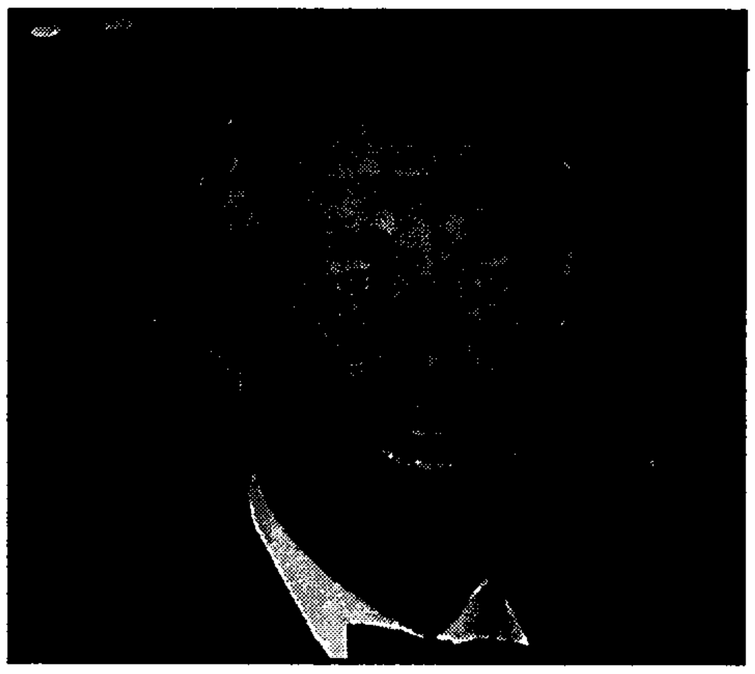
It was 1963. That's over 20-odd years ago. The Rice family were watching the gogglebox when we heard the news that the legendary President Kennedy had been shot. Talk about watersheds! I realised at once that this was jolly rotten luck on a bloke who had had so much going for him – not least a close friendship – lucky chap! – with that gorgeous albeit tragic bird of the unfeathered variety, the legendary Miss Marilyn Monroe.

I never knew John F. Kennedy on a personal basis, but I have always felt that we would have made excellent chums 'cos we had so much in common. We both had kid bros, we both positively adored the latest sounds, and we both had a medium-to-strong interest in current affairs, as was evidenced by the sheer length of time the bloke put into puzzling out the Cuban Missile Crisis. Did JFK revel, like me, in the films of the magnificent Norman Wisdom? History does not record, but the guy had a great sense of humour and you can bet your bottom dollar he found the antics of that Crown Prince of Mirth every bit as funny as the Rice Family did. In fact, I like to think JFK was having a quiet giggle to himself at a favourite scene from a legendary Wisdom film just as his head was so cruelly shot off. What a way to go!

"Oh, what a way to go!" – and what a smashing lyric for a barnstorming chorus! In fact – forgive me! – it's a straight lift from the new musical I've been penning on the whole J.F.K. theme with my good mates Benny and Bjorn (ex-Abba, and in my book anyone who can come up with a song like *Knowing Me, Knowing You* has a pretty good claim to copper-bottomed genius, ta very muchly).

Kennedy is coming along great guns, to coin a phrase. Ingeniously, it all revolves around that last fate-filled day in Dallas. The final scene will truly knock 'em sideways, backwards, whatever. The open-topped limo drives totally on stage, past a full-sized grassy knoll. Three shots ring out. Kennedy's brains are knocked sideways, backwards, whatever. His lovely lady Jackie reaches out for them – but no luck! Tears in her eyes, she turns to the audience and belts out this slow, intensely moving number:

"I sing this mel-o-dy
To J.F. Kenn-e-dy
Cos don't-ya-see
He was a friend-to-me!"



SIR TIM RICE

And the crowd/chorus behind her reply with one voice:

"Oh, what a way to go!
He liked to steal every show!
But now it's cer-tain-ly No-Go!
For the legendary man they once called Big Joe!
It's all such a terrible blow!
Lee Harvey Os-wald's a real so-and-so
And now we are all filled with woe!
Oh, what a way, oh what a way, oh what a way
To GO!!!!"

To be technical for half a mo, note how the last word of each line – go, show, no-go, etc – rhymes not only with the last word in the line before it, but also with the last word in the next line – a hugely complex feat of construction for which, in my humble view, the lyricist gets far too little recognition – critics please note!! Anyway, that all-round good egg David Essex has already agreed to play John F. Kennedy, and the legendary Su Pollard has promised to bring her unique talents to bear on the role of the bubbly Northerner Jackie Kennedy, so we must be doing something right! With the enormously warm Gary Wilmot as L.B.J. and the superb Michael Flatley as the fleet-footed Oswald, we've assembled a dream cast – and the show looks like being a knockout.

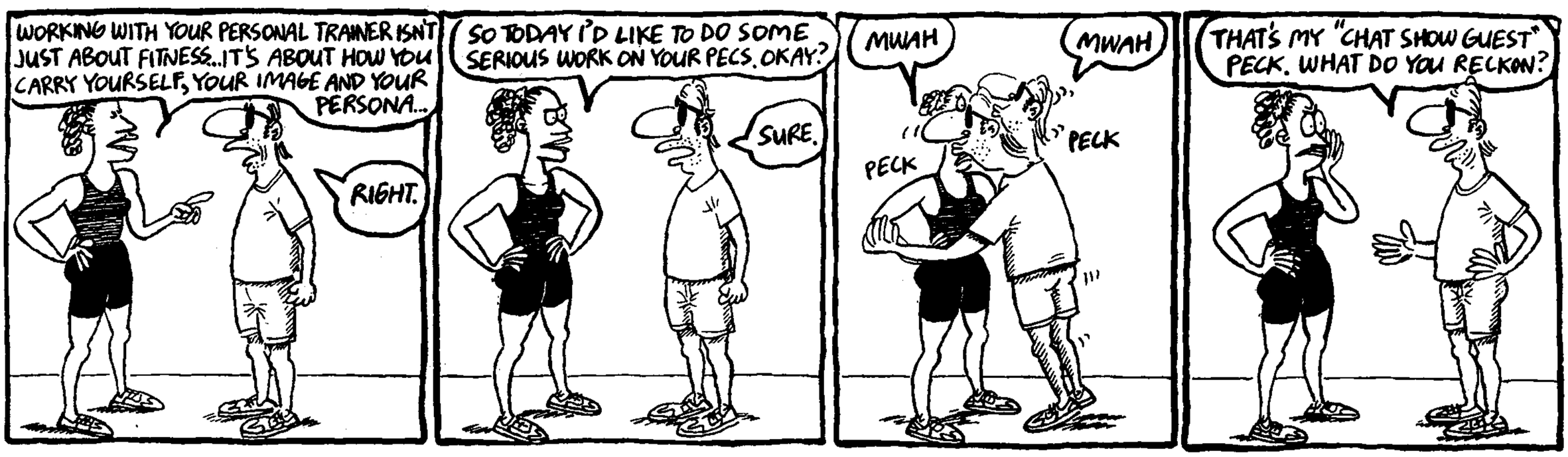
No doubt the professional carpers and self-appointed "experts" (note the quote, *por favor*!) will be out in force at the first night. But one only has to remind oneself that in 1969 the majority of allegedly hip music journalists failed to recognise the musical and cultural revolution that was *Jesus Christ Superstar*, written by a cloth-eared paranoid (only kidding, Andrew!!!) and my own good self. These days, the name of Jesus Christ is on everyone's lips, and that brilliant but enigmatic guy who was the Son of God has taken his rightful place in the International Hall of Fame. Jesus was, above all, the consummate professional. But it's all too easy to forget just what an obscure figure he was back in the 1960s, before *Superstar* turned him into a living legend. *"Jesus Christ – Suuuperstar! You'll go very far – but not necessarily in a car"*. When I wrote those historic lines (and note how "far" rhymes with "car") in less than six hours on my parents' dining-room table, I could have had no idea just how prophetic and world-changey they would be.

But there will always be the carpers, bless their cotton wotsits (not!). I've even seen it written that I wouldn't be where I am aujourd'hui without my good friend Andrew Lloyd-Webber. Ho-hum. Tricky one. Andrew's a complicated fellow, a genuine paradox – on the one hand tight-fisted yet on the other hand extraordinarily careful with his money; legendarily mousey yet at the same time unburdened by any sort of charisma; addicted to success at all costs, yet also wound up in ginormous ambition.

But would he have succeeded without *moi*? Frankly, we'll never know. Inevitably, there are those, perhaps the majority, who say he wouldn't have stood an earthly, that his music is simply the pits. But these are not allegations I'd ever give space to. Wherever I go, I find myself sticking up for the bloke. In fact, it's almost a full-time profession! Put it this way: when I first met Andrew, I had already been in my public school First XI for cricket and volley-ball, I had been a house prefect, aged 12 I had had a poem published in the local rag, I was the proud owner of an autograph collection spanning the likes of Lonnie Donegan, The Singing Nun, Frank Ifield and three of the original Platters, and I had already pulled a goodly number of extremely tasty young chicks. Andrew, on the other hand, was a funny little chap who did nothing but knock around on his piano all day. But I still say to Andrew's many detractors when I have them round for a bit of a bash that a show like *Evita* really might not have worked so well without the music in the background. As Fidel Castro (Brian May of Queen) sings in *Kennedy:*

"Ich bin ein Berliner –
And every composer needs a burly rhymer"

Cheers!


WORKING WITH YOUR PERSONAL TRAINER ISN'T JUST ABOUT FITNESS..IT'S ABOUT HOW YOU CARRY YOURSELF, YOUR IMAGE AND YOUR PERSONA...
RIGHT.
SO TODAY I'D LIKE TO DO SOME SERIOUS WORK ON YOUR PECS. OKAY?
SURE.
MWAH
MWAH
PECK
PECK
THAT'S MY "CHAT SHOW GUEST" PECK. WHAT DO YOU RECKON?

Literary Review

Bored stiffs

Being Dead
Jim Crace
(*Viking, £16.99*)

IT must be nice being Jim Crace. Publishers line up to strow money across your path (in this case Viking Penguin, who dropped nearly three hundred thou' on the last three darling volumes), you win prizes – Whitbread, *Guardian* Fiction etc – critics are on hand to garland you with praise ("A story-teller of unique gifts" – the *Times*) and all that's required of you, apparently, is the ability to tap out stuff like:

"By Wednesday noon, a gloomy day, their bodies were as stiff as wood. A full day dead. They had discoloured, too. The skin was piebald. Pallid on the upper parts. Livid on the undersides. What blood remained had gravitated downward to suffuse their lower vessels with all its darker wastes. Celice, her nose still pressed against the grass, was purple-faced. Her downward-flexing knees and upper thighs were as black as grapes. Her buttocks were as colourless as lard."

In case anyone should imagine that this is your usual Patricia Cornwell-Scarpetta-voyeuristic crap, it should immediately be pointed out that the foregoing — and there are many other passages like it — has been acclaimed as "a work of near-genius" by "one of the most distinctive and talented writers of our time". Not just your average hardcore jollies, then, but for some mysterious reason *art*.

No huge surprise, perhaps, to say that *Being Dead* is about a murder, two murders actually, specifically the summary despatch (anonymous assassin armed with rock) of a middle-aged couple named Celice and Joseph, as they make love on the dunes of a seascape called "Baritone Bay". The happy pair are biologists by trade, and the *al fresco* frolic is intended — at any rate by Joseph — to recreate the sparkling dawn, 30 years since, when Celice was first brought (actually it was her idea) to what we Shakespearean scholars call the sticking point.

A windswept and faintly sinister spot, Baritone Bay is sufficiently far-flung for the corpses not to be discovered for nearly a week — a device that allows Mr Crace not only considerable room for manoeuvre in the bodily decomposition stakes ("They would have benefited from the soft and herby caresses of an undertaker's sponge, the cotton wool soaked in alcohol to close the open pores. No one had plugged their leaking rectums with a wad of lint, or taped their eyelids shut...") but also a chance to replay some of the highlights of their first meeting three decades back.

Star-crossed lovers? No way, baby. In fact, Joseph and Celice turn out to be as tedious a pair of self-obsessed anal retentives as you could wish for — dislikeable, but not even stylishly dislikeable. Worse, their first encounter — back on a field trip with several other students quartered in a wooden shack — came steeped in tragedy. No sooner did they depart for their first shag atop the dunes than the hut caught fire (cause never established, but it may have been Celice leaving the stove on) and incinerated a female colleague.

Inevitably, after a bit one or two people begin to wonder where the two academics are. In the end Syl, their equally dislikeable daughter, sets out in pursuit in the company of a moonlighting student taxi-driver she just happens to have picked up. None of this — the pursuit, the past lives, fixation with corporeal decay — is helped by Crace's decision to set the story in a coy half-world that might be America but then again might not be, thereby imposing a fabular backdrop rather than the situational exactitudes which this kind of thing really requires.

Well, they find the stiffs, Syl returns to the house to tidy up, where she comes across her carefully preserved baby teeth, and that's it. As chilly as the contents of an ice-cream parlour and much less sustaining. Crace's last one, an equally detached account of the 40 days spent by Our Lord in the wilderness, made the Booker shortlist, and I confidently predict that its successor will do the same. Early reports from the judging camp suggest that Gauleiter Kaufman, this year's chairman, has already started to throw his weight around, and *Being Dead* sounds *exactly* his cup of tea.

Meanwhile, a subsidiary question that may intrigue anyone who follows the careers of fashionable novelists. What does Jim Crace do with his time? 210 pages, printed in large type and probably not much more than 70,000 words long, this one apparently occupied him for the best part of thirty months.

BOOKS & BOOKMEN

■ PETER JAY's new book *The Wealth of Man* – due from Weidenfeld & Nicolson next March – should make interesting reading. According to the publisher's puff, it will chronicle "the ascent of man as the only economic animal – as producer, consumer and accumulator of wealth".

Jaybotham is well placed to write about this and the various novel approaches that can be taken to accumulate wealth: for many years he was Robert Maxwell's chief of staff and head bag carrier.

Despite having had extensive first-hand experience of such an accomplished "accumulator", it is likely readers will be disappointed with Jay's coverage of his old mentor. The potted biography supplied by Weidenfeld, while covering every other aspect of Jay's illustrious career, makes no mention of his embarrassing association with Cap'n Bob.

■ STAFF at publisher Harper-Collins are very keen on Jeffrey Archer's bid to become lord mayor of London.

Fair enough, considering he keeps these people in work. "No," said one minion. "You don't understand. If he becomes mayor he won't write any more books."

■ PROFESSOR Christopher Andrew, co-author of *The Mitrokhin Archive*, the book which sparked the spate of spy revelations over the weekend, has also written the introduction to a set of wartime MI5 records opened in January.

Security Service 1909-1945: The Official History was due to be published in June 1999, but did not come out until August and is now the Public Record Office (PRO) book of the month.

Was the late release owing to delays in the production schedule, as the PRO claims, or was it because of wrangles with the cabinet office over security implications?

Bayley's Iris Cream

Iris and the Friends: A Year of Memories
John Bayley
(Duckworth, £16.95)

IRIS and the Friends, in case you don't read the papers, is a hastily-penned successor to last year's *Iris: A Memoir* — now on its umpteenth reprint — in which Professor John Bayley uses the experience of caring for his wife as she tossed in the last throes of Alzheimer's as the pivot for some Proustian trips down memory lane.

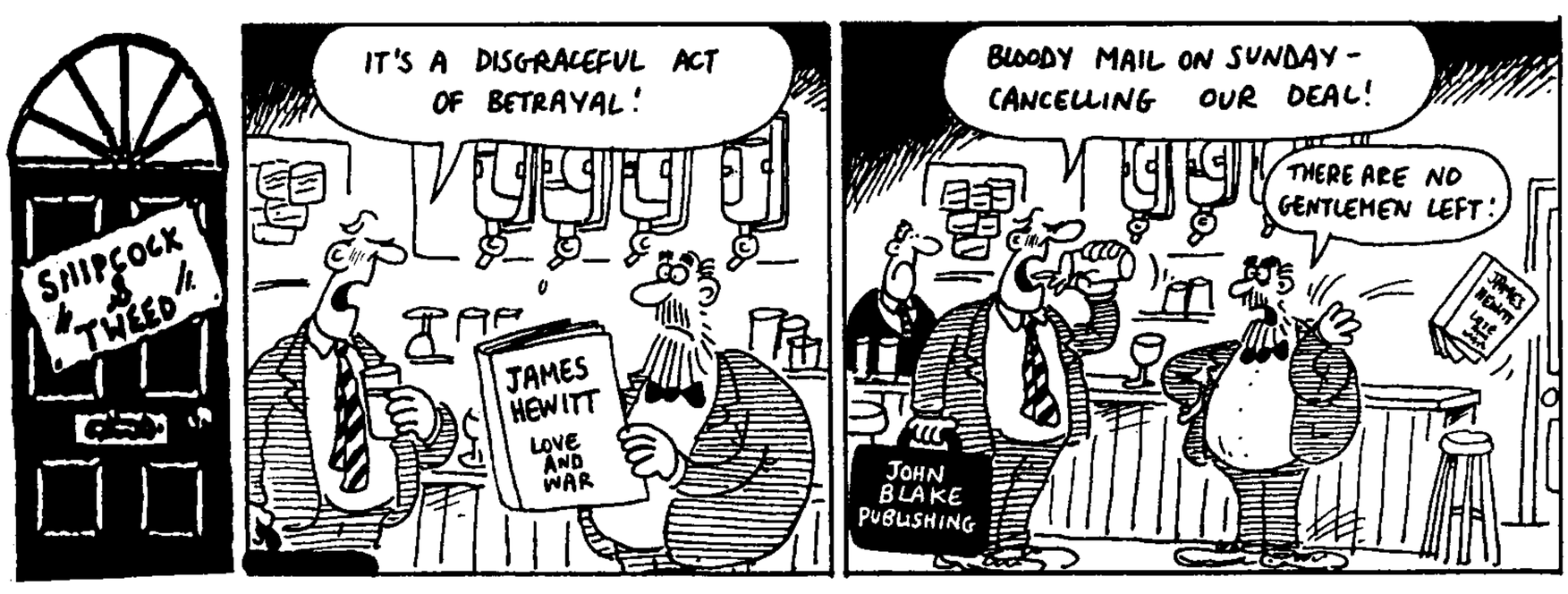
Amid the fuss about Dame Judi Dench's appearance in the forthcoming film, Peter Conradi's impending biography and the somewhat implausible insertion of "John and Iris" into colour supplement rosters of "Great lovers of our time", the following observations may be of interest.

Notwithstanding the frequent gratuitousness about his wife — Iris on the loo, Iris raptly picking up bits of excrement and so on — and the merciless public exposure of an intensely private person, this is self-evidently a book about John Bayley, a kind of "My Early Life" with occasional Murdochian foregroundings. Of course, anyone is entitled to shed as many salt tears over the rapturous solitude of 1930s golf-courses as they wish, but... The drawback about Bayley's amiable chuntering — and it *is* only amiable chuntering — is that the loudly advertised unworldliness is so obviously a pose that it quickly becomes intensely irritating.

Just as in *Iris* Bayley proudly announced the world that he'd discovered this fascinating band of children's TV characters called Teletubbies, rather in the tone of an astronaut bringing back news from the moon, so the current round of army lookbacks are full of wide-eyed revelations about these mortar bomb things, which if you put them in a metal tube actually *explode*, don't you know? In the end these continual exclamations of surprise over every conceivable manifestation of the modern world are as unconvincing as the relentless self-deprecation. Dear me, how did I get into Oxford? How on earth did they let me have a scholarship? Why wasn't I found out? (This from the former Warton Professor of English Literature, by the way.)

Where does all this leave poor Dame Iris, details of whose lavatorial habits even the most unlettered reader of the *Daily Telegraph* is now happily in possession of? Dead and canonised, while her relict confides hugely embarrassing details of girls he might just have brushed mouths with in 1946. Oddly enough, for a memoir praised for its "truth" and "honesty", the effect is woefully incongruous, if not ridiculous. Unseemly as it may be to question the motives of a man whose wife died a bare seven months ago, what on earth did John Bayley think he was doing?

'Bookworm'


SHIPCOCK & TWEED
IT'S A DISGRACEFUL ACT OF BETRAYAL!
JAMES HEWITT LOVE AND WAR
BLOODY MAIL ON SUNDAY - CANCELLING OUR DEAL!
THERE ARE NO GENTLEMEN LEFT!
JOHN BLAKE PUBLISHING

IN THE BACK

REBUILDING KOSOVO

Let me through – I'm a lawyer

THOUGH tit-for-tat killings continue in Kosovo, British government officials have decided now is the time to fight over contracts. Hence the crack teams of emergency lawyers arriving in the battle-scarred region.

City firm Clifford Chance is playing a leading role. Its head of international law, Jeremy Carver, has helped draw up some initial regulations. But as he told the *Lawyer* magazine, he is looking forward to working on big telecom and banking projects.

Norton Rose is also optimistic of work because of its experience of privatisation in the Balkans. Other firms, like Constant & Constant, Cameron McKenna and Nabarro Nathanson, attended the department of trade and industry's "regeneration task force", all optimistic that a good war generates lots of profits for UK lawyers.

Meanwhile Britain's builders are working hard on starting turf disputes in the ruins to keep their legal chums in work. Consultants, including engineers Mott McDonald, who flew out with the regeneration force thought they had a contract under their belt to run water and power in Kosovo after they submitted initial assessments of damage. They were then shocked to find that inspecting the Kosovo A power station did not guarantee them the contract from the United Nations missions in Kosovo. Senior UN officials wanted the contract to go to tender, giving European firms like Electricité de France the chance to bid. After long and strong representation from DTI officials, the UN relented and gave the nine-month contract to the Brits.

Responsibility for managing coalmines, power generation and distribution, aimed at producing double the domestic power need for Kosovo, has thus gone to the UK for the next nine months, with the possibility of a further nine months' renewal. The management costs for seven operatives is currently estimated at £1.5m.

Nigel Thompson, chair of the regeneration force, told *Construction News* that "there will be very little work in Kosovo itself, but a lot in Serbia... eventually. But we must serve our apprenticeship". Some builders are already trying to get a foot in the door, Milosevic or no.

Builder Taylor Woodrow and engineers Ove Arup went on a self-funded tour of Serbia in July. It was therefore no surprise to see Taylor Woodrow busy lobbying here against any "ethical" dimension being attached to the export credit guarantee scheme.

PRISON VISITING

Halow and goodbye

JULIE ROBERTSON, who was forced to close her charity for prison visitors in March because of allegations made in a memo circulated to more than 100 prisons, could now be forced to pay £6,000 to the Home Office.

Halow (London) was the subject of a prison service circular in September 1997 which accused Mrs Robertson of harbouring a paedophile (*Eye* 960).

The charity's treasurer Doug Arnold was convicted of possessing paedophile material in 1998. The memo alleged, however, that Arnold had been present during prison visits and in particular that he was involved with the children's escort service. Mrs Robertson maintains this is completely untrue. In fact when Arnold brought a young man into the Halow offices she sacked him on the spot and as soon as she heard of his conviction informed the prison service.

The memo signed by Mrs Audrey Wickington, a senior prison official, said: "The police investigation into this matter reveals strong suspicions that Mr Arnold has been using his position within Halow London to assist paedophiliac activity, particularly with regard to the escort services." Not true.

In November 1998 chief inspector G.B. Jones from the Metropolitan police wrote to Mrs Robertson to confirm: "There was no evidence to suggest that Arnold had any personal involvement in escorting children and, therefore, police enquiries were not focused in this area."

Robertson subsequently brought an action at the high court for defamation against Wickington and her employer, the home office; but in December 1998 she ran out of energy and the case was suspended.

Halow as a charity had brought a separate county court case against Lambeth council in March 1998 for costs incurred by withdrawal of services as a result of the memo. The judge awarded the charity £211.00 in damages.

In July the treasury solicitor Lee John-Charles wrote to Mrs Robertson requesting her consent to avoid another hearing in the high court case. It soon transpired that her written consent would make her liable for the home office costs of £6,235.80. In a letter dated 17 August, however, Lee John-Charles wrote: "On the other hand my clients might instruct me not to pursue their entitlement to costs, but that is all for the future.

"What is likely to influence my clients' attitude on costs is your attitude in relation to the county court action in which the defendant was ordered to pay Halow £211.00 in total."

Mrs Robertson's faith in the home office and its suggestion that she will not have to pay the full costs if she lets the other case go is diminished by the response to a request relating to her degree. In May Martin Narey, director of regimes at the prison service, refused Mrs Robertson's application for access to prisons as part of her MSc at the Institute of Psychiatry into the effect of short-term separation on prisoners and their families.

SUPERMARKETS

Fishy business

TESCO Stores boasts of environmental probity but contributes to the demise of Scotland's wild salmon – now at their lowest numbers since accurate recording began in 1952.

The company has been selling wild salmon at £4.99 per lb in its Inverness branch. The fish were small salmon, grilse, returning to their natal rivers to spawn for the first time. They should have been left in peace to get on with the business instead of ending up on the fishmonger's slab.

Concerned about adverse publicity, Tesco now refuses to say which netting station the fish came from. It claims the information is "commercially confidential".

Not content with impacting on wild stocks on the east coast of Scotland, Tesco Stores market allegedly "fake" salmon from west coast factory-fish farms. It is beyond reasonable doubt (see *Eye* 984) that disease and pollution from these farms have brought many distinct populations of west coast wild salmon and sea-trout to the point of extinction.

Tesco sells these fish as "Scottish Salmon". It does not tell customers that they are farm fish, neither does it which farm the fish come from. It says that this information is "commercially confidential".

Still, Tesco customers can be assured that the "Scottish salmon" they buy has been produced without resource to the use of the neurotoxic chemical insecticide, ivermectin. Tesco knows this is true because that is what its supplier tells it. The supplier knows this is true because that is what the fish farmer tells them. The truth is that there is no independent scrutiny of the use of toxic chemicals on fish farms.

A spokeswoman for Tesco notes: "All suppliers are required to have full traceability for salmon purchased from farms and the feed and treatment records of these fish." However, Prof David Mackay, of the Scottish Environment Pollution Agency, confirms that his office has received 18 notifications from fish farmers of their intention to use ivermectin. And who are these farmers? Yup, you guessed it: this information is "commercially confidential".

SOUTHALL DISASTER

Uff justice

THE even-handedness of the authorities in the forthcoming inquiry into the 1997 Southall rail disaster can be seen by their approach to crucial documents.

The companies responsible for the crash – Railtrack and Great Western Trains – have had these documents for the many months GWT and the engine driver faced criminal proceedings. The victims of the crash, including the families of seven people who died in it, have only just had 49 huge files of vital documents delivered to them. Their lawyers will somehow have to absorb them in a single week unless John Uff, the engineering arbitrator in charge of the inquiry, agrees with the families' attempt to adjourn the hearings.

The bereaved families suspect the Uff inquiry will result in another cover-up which will leave the directors of two mighty private rail companies effectively immune from redress or even blame for the Southall outrage.

The criminal prosecution against GWT collapsed when Mr Justice Scott-Baker ruled that no company could be prosecuted for corporate manslaughter unless at least one named director was prosecuted as well. British transport police spent many months searching for a director of GWT who could be held responsible for the Southall crash. They finally named Richard George, who coincidentally was a passenger on the train that crashed, and recommended he be prosecuted alongside his company.

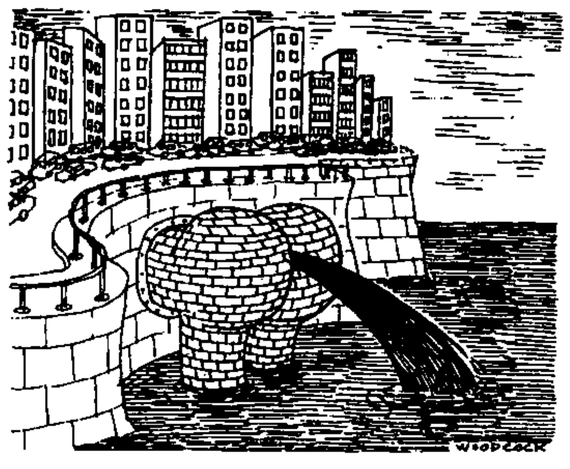
The DPP, for some reason, proceeded to prosecute the company on its own without George and with the inevitable result that the prosecution was flung out by Scott-Baker. In another case brought in front of the same judge by the health and safety executive (HSE), GWT was found guilty and fined £1.5m, not an unbearable large sum compared to GWT's annual profits of £300m. The attorney-general has referred Scott-Baker's judgment about corporate manslaughter to the appeal court for a purely academic ruling as to whether a company can be sued on its own without a director being named.

The Uff inquiry is likely to mull over the recommendations of Mr Justice Hidden, the high court judge who presided over the inquiry into the 1988 Clapham rail disaster. Hidden's recommendation for automatic train protection – a system that stops trains automatically in emergencies – has been the subject of "pilot projects" for seven years. One of the two companies carrying out these "pilot projects" is Great Western Trains. So single-mindedly has Great Western Trains pursued this pilot project that its advance warning system was turned off during the journey which ended in the Southall crash.

The inquiry is also likely to concentrate on the role of privatisation – whether, before privatisation, a goods train would have been able to cross over a track reserved for a high-speed passenger train. New rules for "commercial parity" under privatisation were almost certainly responsible for the circumstances which made the Southall crash possible. Naturally, lawyers for the victims will want to see if there is any reference to these new rules in the Tory government documents which gave the franchise to GWT. For some reason the franchising documents are not among the 49 files so tardily released.

YORKSHIRE WATER

Naming names



DESPITE shareholders agreeing last month to change Yorkshire Water's name to the Kelda Group, it is business as usual for the company, it seems.

One of its subsidiaries – Babcock Engineering – has just pleaded guilty to pollution charges at Wetherby magistrates court. The firm allowed sulphuric acid from a water treatment works to pollute a stream which feeds trout lakes on the world-renowned Harewood estate. After hearing that the incident had killed more than 1,000 fish, magistrates fined the firm £7,000 plus £7,000 costs.

Meanwhile the Kelda Group was due back in the same dock this week to answer a series of charges of supplying homes in Leeds and Bradford with water unfit for humans to drink. As chief executive Dr Kevin Bond (£276,000 pa) assured shareholders at the annual meeting in Harrogate, despite the name change the Kelda Group "will continue with the same commitment" as before.

INSPECTOR KNACKER

Don't call us...

YET another complaint has been filed against Inspector Knacker of Northumbria over his handling of the IRA shooting of former Royal Ulster Constabulary double agent Martin McGartland outside his Tyneside home two months ago.

McGartland and the neighbours who saved his life by staunching the blood from his six bullet wounds have already protested about the near-fatal delay in getting an ambulance to him (see last *Eye*). Officers had to ensure the area was safe before allowing in the emergency services, a Northumbria spokesman said.

Now the neighbour, Peter Connon, has lodged a second complaint alleging that the police have failed to take seriously a threatening phone call made to his house three days after the shooting.

Mr Connon's 18-year-old son Adam took a call from a man with an Irish accent asking to speak to Andrea Connon, his mother. When Adam asked "Why?" the caller said to tell her he was in Whitley Bay — where they lived — and laughed "like a maniac".

'You can imagine that we were still pretty traumatised after the shooting — we still are. My son was literally shaking like a leaf after he put down the phone," said Mr Connon.

Police were able to trace the call to Horsham in Surrey and went to interview the caller — apparently a commercial airline pilot — but have decided to take no action. Mr Connon said police initially told him the man was a do-gooder, acting out of the family's interest. The hoax call was a way of letting the family know he had traced them via the internet and that the IRA could do the same. A second version from the police was that the man said he had hung up after calling and had denied saying anything to the family.

Either way the police had decided he was harmless. "I was furious. The police saw how distressed Adam was. We had just seen our neighbour shot by the IRA. For whatever sick reason, this man threatened my son and my family. Yet as far as the police are concerned, they are acting as if it never happened."

Knacker confirmed it had received a complaint.

HIGH PRINCIPALS

School for scandal

IN THE recent hearings of the Commons public accounts committee (PAC) on one of the most preposterous further education scandals of recent times – at Halton College, Widnes, Cheshire – Maria Eagle, Labour MP for Liverpool Garston, made some telling points.

She pointed out that in the national audit office (NAO) report on Halton "there are five full pages of conclusions and recommendations from previous reports relevant to this report in respect of governance and management in higher and further education... It seems to me that there has been an obvious problem with college governance for some time, yet we have you back here again with another serious problem of fraud and mismanagement. How many more times are you going to have to come back before we get this straight?"

The question was answered by Michael Bichard, a senior education department official, who mumbled: "We have tried to follow up every recommendation that the committee has made on specific issues." He promised his department would do everything in its power to ensure the Halton scandal would never happen again. But a close look at what happened shows that following up committee recommendations is unlikely to make much difference.

When Martin Jenkins was appointed principal of Halton in 1993, and Jenny Dolphin became deputy, the couple formed a "principalship" which governed as if no one else mattered. Staff were sacked at random; expensive franchises were handed out like confetti; and the "principalship" took off on round-the-world freebies at college expense.

Jenkins and Dolphin stayed in expensive hotels and consumed at will. Once, joined by the chairman of the governors, a Mr Thomas, they got through £142 worth of drink in one session. In France they shunned the train and instead rented a Lexus for a day at a cost of £1,000.

These "duties abroad" took the two executives away from the college for almost a whole year in total. At one stage they went on a 19-day trip to Hong Kong, Australia and Toronto at a cost of £15,000. Only seven of those days could conceivably have been described as college business.

Without even asking the governors, Martin Jenkins spent £31,000 on etchings for his office. Altogether the extravagance of the principalship, especially in "franchising out" educational services to other colleges, cost the college £16m more than it was entitled to.

Somehow this was all nodded through the college's internal auditors, Deloitte Touche, and then nodded through by the college's external auditors, er, Deloitte Touche. Somehow, for five years, the spectacular overspending and rule-breaking avoided the attention of the regulators at the Further Education Funding Council and the department for education, and would no doubt have continued indefinitely but for an anonymous whistleblower who wrote to the NAO in March 1998.

If such allegations had been made against an ordinary staff member, he or she would have been instantly dismissed. But in May 1998 Jenkins and Dolphin were suspended on full pay for almost a year during which they threatened the college with judicial review and even managed to get their legal costs paid by the college insurers.

In December, when disciplinary proceedings were at last instituted against them, both said they could not attend hearings because they were suffering from stress. In April this year, when the grim facts about their term became clear, they finally agreed to resign. Their eleven months on suspension on full pay cost the college £200,000. The college governors, who are also due to resign en masse this autumn, have not sought to retrieve a penny from either member of their precious principalship. The cost of their profligacy is to be met by members of staff, 147 of whom are to lose their jobs as a direct result of the scandal.

The NAO wearily investigated the Halton scandal and reported in the usual harsh terms in April. The PAC followed suit last week. The department for education and the Further Education Funding Council announced its "deep concern". Everyone agreed that, like all the other similar cases reported in this column, Halton was a scandal and should not be allowed to happen again.

Yet one answer to the PAC hearings from the education department's Mr Bichard rather gave the game away. He said the authorities must not be stampeded into a remedy which would "damage the entrepreneurial nature of the college". Er... isn't this the whole problem?

Scooper pooper

"NO ONE would deny the need for colleges to improve both their image and the amount of media coverage their work receives." These wise words were written by David Eade, the £110,000-a-year principal of Barnsley College, in a hilarious article for *FE Now* magazine which has been brought to the attention of High Principals.

The article goes on to explain that Mr Eade is chairing an "Awareness and Impact Campaign Committee" at the Association of Colleges to develop a better media strategy for the sector. This would involve building much closer relationships with the nationals, especially the tabloids.

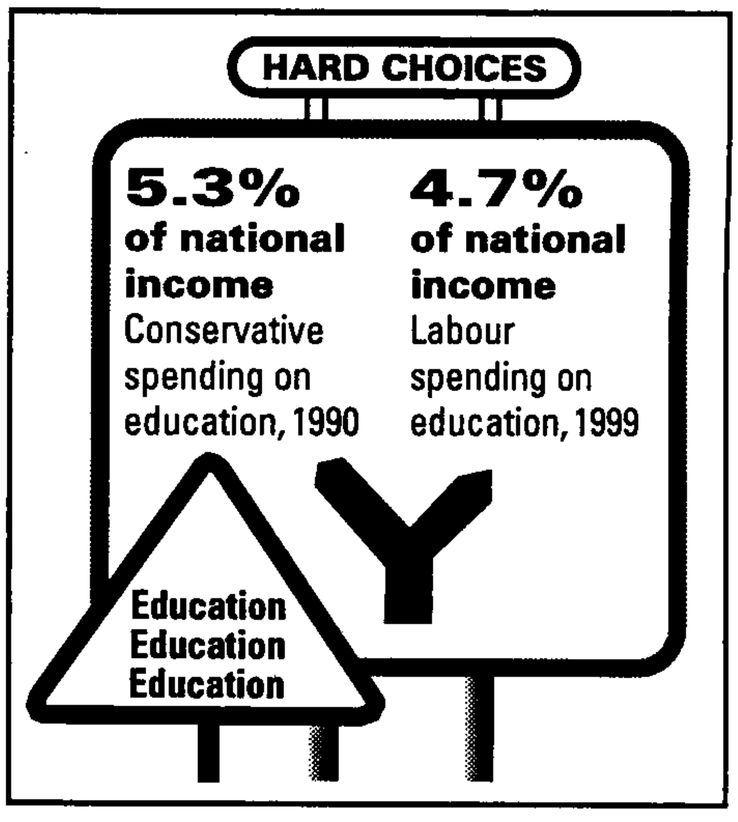
"One of the ways this could be done," suggests Eade, "is by linking an individual principal with a reporter and building up a working relationship through regular briefing meetings, responding rapidly to approaches and questions and being ready to flag up stories that might be of interest, especially as a scoop."

At the same time he warns that college executives should be cautious "to avoid simply being a 'patsy' for an experienced journalist".

Since writing the article Eade has been getting lots of "media coverage" (notably in the *Eye* and the *Barnsley Chronicle*) about the £21,000 loan given by Barnsley College company Progress Training Ltd to a surfing magazine run by his former step-children. But far from developing working relationships with the reporters concerned, Eade has instead decided to take them to the press complaints commission (PCC).

Eade seems to be under the impression that, as a limited company, Progress Training can do what it likes with its money even though much of it comes directly from Barnsley College. The Further Education Funding Council is currently looking into whether Eade was effectively using its money to fund a business venture of spurious educational value run by his ex-wife's children.

It may discover that the reality is even more serious. When the surfing loan to a company called Frontline (UK) Ltd was approved, Eade claims he disclosed that there was a potential conflict of interest because the money would be going to his former step-children. What may not have been realised is that the company secretary of Frontline UK at the time was none other than David Eade.



In the City

"YOU cannot expect this bank to be the policeman of the world." So declared chairman Sir William Purves at the 1995 annual shareholders' gathering of Midland Bank, now HSBC.
Sir William, who had been out east a long time and seen more than a few strange financial things, was being quizzed about the bank's business in Indonesia. His dismissive reply took its cue from successive British politicians and business leaders. But the real reason was that business was booming.

The three decades which saw the dictator Suharto, his family and cronies steal billions while illegally annexing East Timor and murdering, torturing and repressing thousands of its and Indonesia's citizens were good times for not just Britain's arms manufacturers but also British banks whose loans helped fuel the regime. Growing evidence of the Suharto clique's corruption and kleptomania was no disincentive.

By the time Suharto fell in May 1998 foreign banks were owed a staggering $80bn by Indonesian companies, banks and institutions. Much of this lending was to banks, companies and joint ventures in which the Suharto family had substantial interests. They amassed a fortune estimated at up to $10bn while Indonesia was receiving billions in international aid for its poor!

Britain's share of this orgy of lending to one of the world's greatest kleptocracies and bloodiest dictatorships was over $3bn.

The banks would say that they were only following the lead of international institutions such as the American dominated International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. For throughout the Cold War and beyond western powers shut their eyes to Suharto's corruption and the brutality of his generals, taking the line encapsulated almost a century ago by US president Teddy Roosevelt: "He may be a sonofabitch but he's our sonofabitch."

Until the 1997 crash wiped the smile off the face of the Asian tiger economies banks fell over themselves to lend. This caused a serious rethink because suddenly Indonesia adopted a "can't pay, won't pay" policy which forced a rash of bad loan write-offs that severely dented profits and prompted a lack of enthusiasm for new loans.

But there was still banking business to be done in Indonesia even if the killing went on in East Timor and Suharto had merely been replaced by one of his closest associates.

"Willie" Purves's sensitivity about HSBC's business in Indonesia is understandable. Because of its Hong Kong roots HSBC had the biggest British presence there – more than $1bn in loan exposure, nine branches, 800 staff. Until the crash Indonesia and Suharto had been very good for HSBC.

They had also been good for Standard Chartered which was reckoned to have a loan exposure close to $1bn. That number is all set to increase under a deal whereby Standard Chartered is due to rescue insolvent Bank Bali from which $70m was hoisted to boost president Habibie's Golkar party. No wonder the bank appeared unperturbed last week as the ethnic cleansing increased in East Timor and thousands were butchered. "We are taking a three to five year view," a bank spokesman told the *Daily Mail*. "East Timor is a complicated situation. There are no circumstances in which it could cause us to leave Indonesia."

Indeed it has never prevented other British banks from fighting for Indonesian business. Barclays had a substantial presence as indicated by a loan exposure of £300m. In 1996 its BZW offshoot helped provide $410m for a copper smelting project. NatWest also joined in. Its exposure was almost £200m. So too did Royal Bank of Scotland and merchant bankers Schroders which had loans of £40m. But then they can point to encouragement from visiting Tory ministers eager to ensure British banks grabbed their share of an estimated £600m privatisation bonanza. British banking interests were no doubt also to the fore when Habibie chatted to chancellor Gordon Brown during a visit to London weeks before he was handpicked to replace his patron.

British banks can also point to the fact that Britain was not the biggest player in Indonesia. That dubious privilege went to the Japanese banks who are still owed $16bn. Next up are German banks with $6bn lead by Deutsche Bank, Dresdner, Commerzbank and Berliner. American banks' (Citibank, Bank of America, Chase Manhattan, BankBoston) $3bn exposure is similar to that of their British rivals. After that follow the French (Banque Nationale de Paris, Credit Lyonnais) and the Dutch (ABN-Amro) plus the Australians (ANZ).

Needless to say the governments for all these countries have suddenly discovered Indonesia's rulers are untrustworthy tyrants who can only be restrained by threatening to turn off the financial tap which has been wide open for years. But whatever the political rhetoric, as Standard Chartered openly admits, the bankers will still be there because the banking business is about money not morality.

Indonesia is merely the latest example after Slobodan Milosevic and the billionaire pilots of Russian flight capital that the successors to those who financed Hitler have never found a dictator they did not like or with which they believed they could not do profitable business.

FORMER Guinness chairman and convicted conman Ernest Saunders has discovered the internet. Indeed he will be speaking at a London conference on 20 October on the subject of "Internet marketing – generating sales".

Curiously the conference programme makes no mention of Guinness or his abbreviated time in jail for presiding over the illegal share support operation during the 1986 Distillers takeover battle.

Instead it describes how, as chairman of Stambridge e-Business: "In the last eight years Ernest has extended his management expertise into Internet and e-commerce strategic marketing and business development."

The sad, shambling figure who judges were told could not recall the name of the US president now "advises international companies" and manages "a number of private internet venture companies". Among the list of "Internet Marketing – the management perspective" topics on which he will speak there is modestly no mention of his great contribution to medical science.

So perhaps readers would like to contact this medical marvel at ernest.saunders@ice-web.com and request details of how the man the court of appeal was told was a victim of Alzheimer's disease conquered this irreversible condition.

"Therefore, let us embrace the new technology with enthusiasm..."

THE sudden death of Tory MP Alan Clark leaves unanswered questions about the reasons for his long friendship with one of the City's greatest insider dealers Christopher Selmes. Clark refers to meetings with "Daisy", as he called Selmes, known in the City less flatteringly as "The Weasel", in his diaries. A man who liked to play the stock market, Clark also refers to Selmes offering to handle his investments. Clark wrote that he declined because he suspected Selmes wanted money "to prime his own dodgy little deals". Clark would have learned just how dodgy when he became trade minister in the Thatcher government. The Department of Timidity & Inaction knew all about "Daisy" but had never been able to do anything about him. Selmes died of Aids as the DTI inspectors were closing in once again. So he was never able to tell them anything about his share dealings, usually through Switzerland, or those of his close friends such as Alan Clark.

PHONEY Pharaoh Mohamed Fayed looks like he may need to curb his spending. This year he was unable to collect a dividend from his Harrods Holdings group after the owner of his flagship Knightsbridge store plunged into the red. Fayed and his two brothers received £14m last year into their Bermudan partnership. This in turn was down on £20m the previous year and £40m for 1996. The disappearing dividend followed a £8.5m pre-tax loss to January 1999 caused by having to write £30m off his badly timed £58m investment in Alpha Airports. This compared with a 1998 Harrods Holdings profit of £53.3m. But even without this setback trading inside Harrods was down on the previous year cutting group turnover from £548m to £527m. Harrods has yet to file its own results but retailing profits fell sharply from £65m to £51m. This is blamed on the strong pound. As a result operating profits before interest fell from £75.4m to £48.6m. Borrowings grew to £275m. All of which may cause some concern for Fayed's bankers – who agreed to lend him up to £340m for five years in 1997 and which he will soon have to start repaying. One reason perhaps for the no dividend decision.

'Slicker'

THE DIRECTORS

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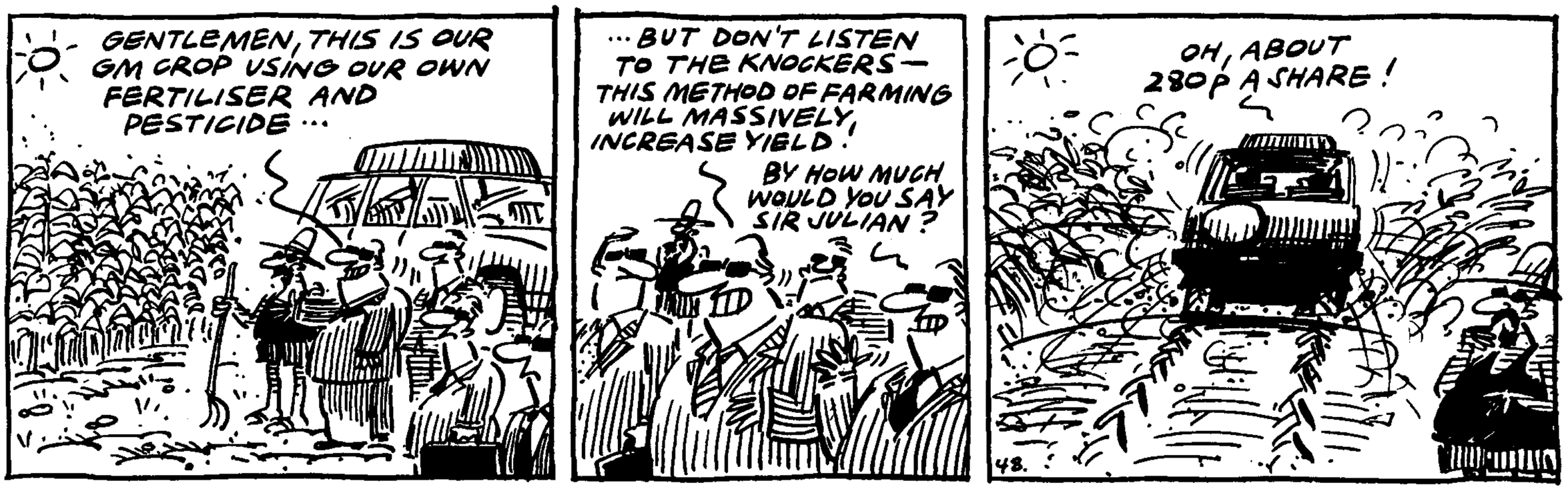
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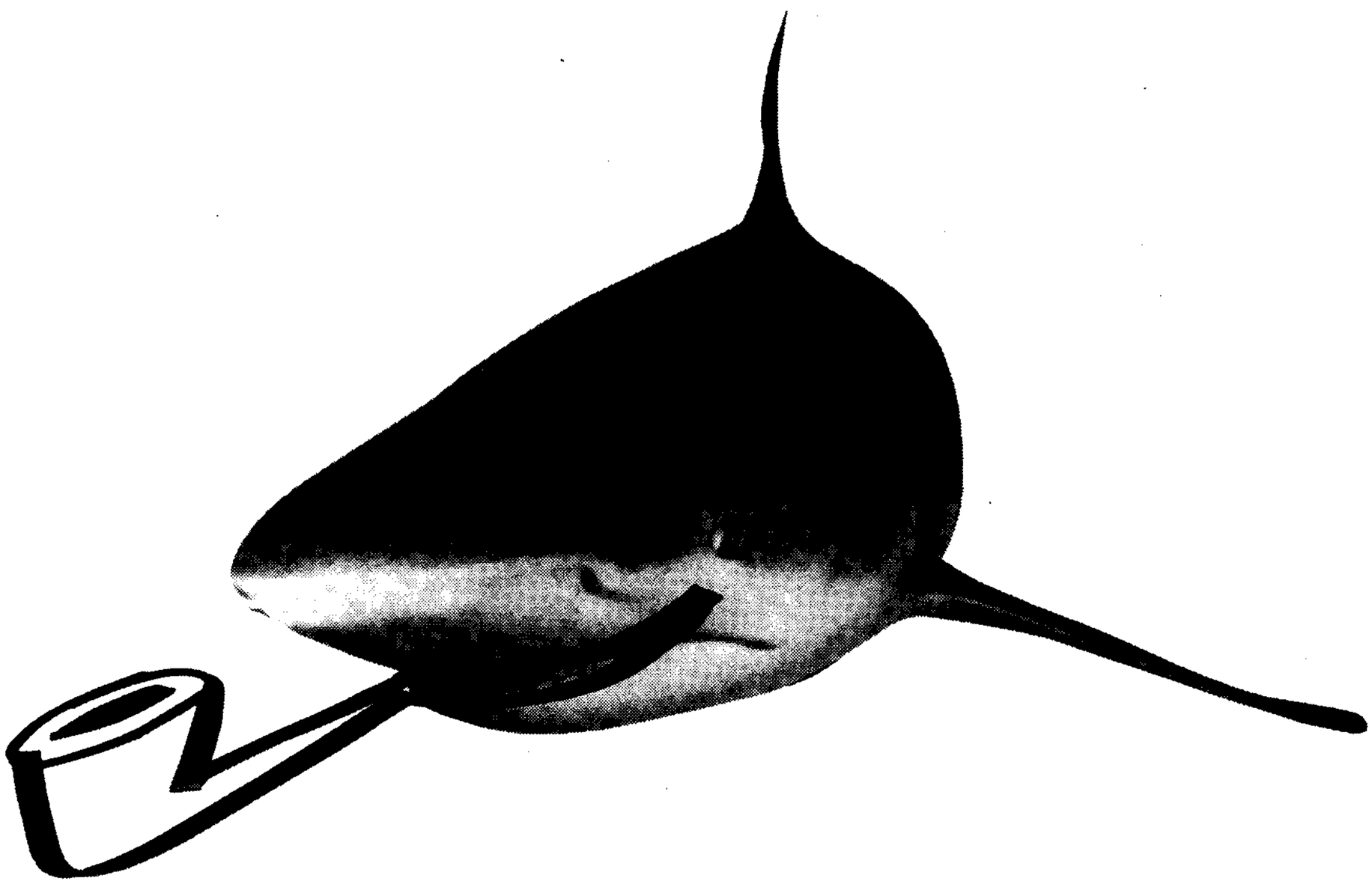

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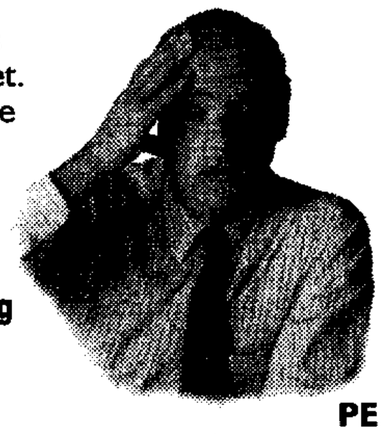

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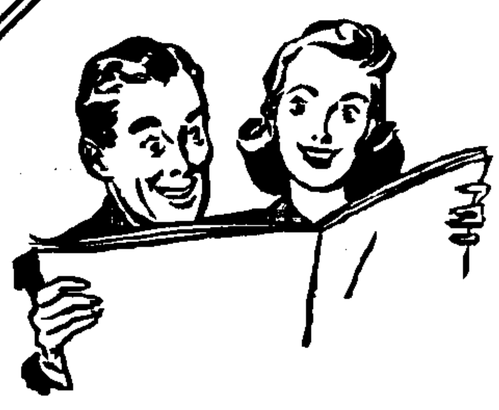

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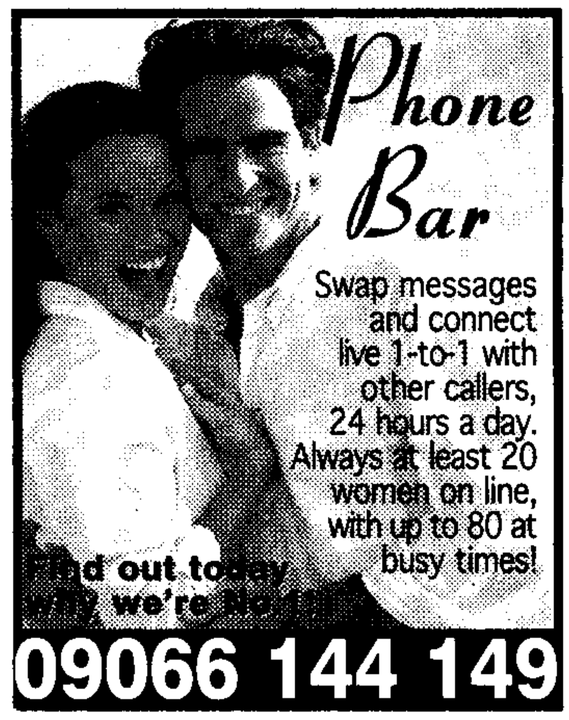
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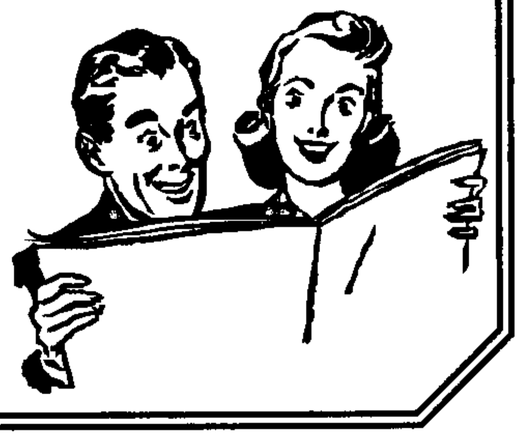

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The much-trumpeted Monty Python reunion tour looks to be as dead as the proverbial parrot. Eric Idle poured scorn on the idea that the anarchic comedians will ever perform together again. "I think a reunion is unlikely…Graham insists on remaining dead, and without him it's not the same."
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SPEECHWRITING by Mitch Murray – see page 31…

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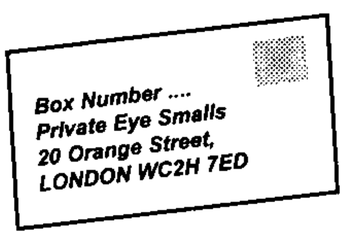

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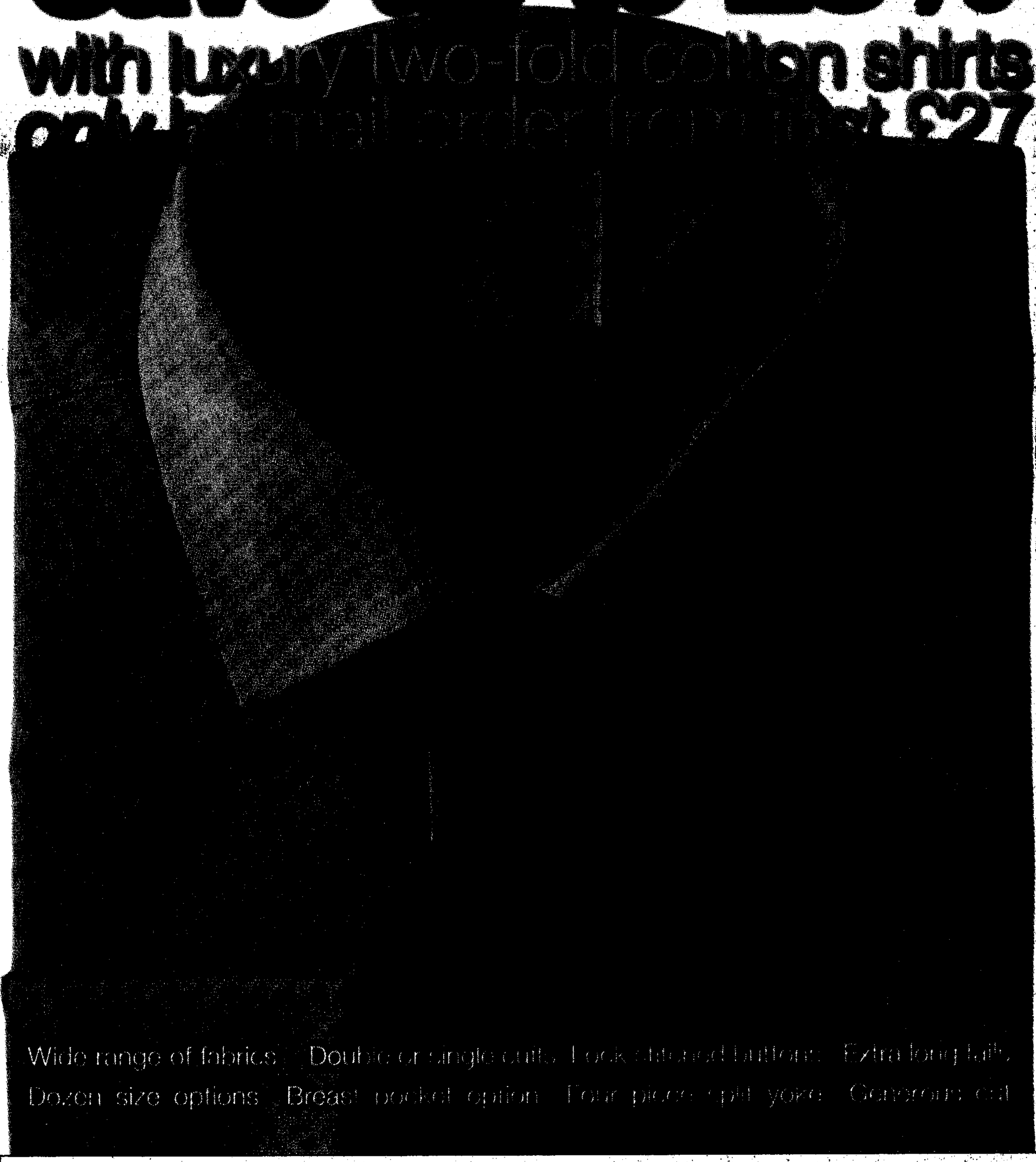
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